Commentary

VOLUME NINETY • NUMBER TWO • AUGUST 1990

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Allan Bloom

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Louis Winnick

The Anti-Cold War Brigade
Arch Puddington

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André A. Aciman

Surviving Affirmative Action (More or Less)
Frederick R. Lynch

Incident at Carpentras
Roger Kaplan

Books in Review: Irwin M. Stelzer/Joel Schwartz/ Robert Richman/Jackson Toby/Edward Norden

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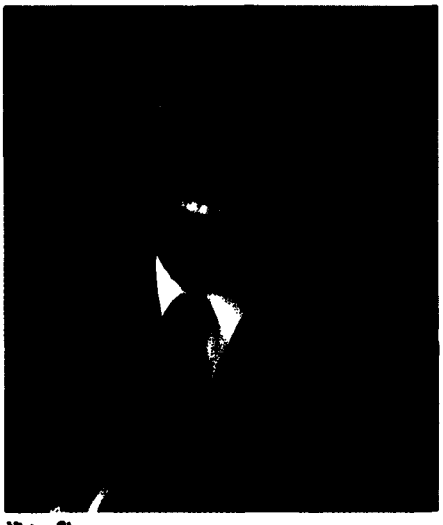

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VOLUME 90 NUMBER TWO *AUGUST 1990*

Articles 15 Western Civ—and Me *Allan Bloom*

22 America's "Model Minority" *Louis Winnick*

30 The Anti-Cold War Brigade *Arch Puddington*

39 Was Spinoza a Heretic? *André A. Aciman*

44 Surviving Affirmative Action (More or Less) *Frederick R. Lynch*

Observations 48 Incident at Carpentras *Roger Kaplan*

Letters 2 from *Charles R. Kelley, Leon R. Kass, Otis L. Graham, Jr., Maurice B. Mitchell, Norman F. Cantor, Harry V. Jaffa, David G. Roskies, Ruth King, Daniel Pipes, David A. Bovenizer, Charles Horner,* and others

Books in Review 52 Israel's Dilemma, by Ezra Sohar *Irwin M. Stelzer*

54 The End of Nature, by Bill McKibben *Joel Schwartz*

57 Dream Song: The Life of John Berryman *Robert Richman*

61 Small Victories, by Samuel G. Freedman *Jackson Toby*

62 One, by One, by One: Facing the Holocaust, by Judith Miller *Edward Norden*

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Letters from Readers

Life and Death Questions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Death With Dignity and the Sanctity of Life" [March], Leon R. Kass addresses the serious and growing problem of when and how a human life should end in these times. We are faced with a medical technology becoming able to preserve a bodily shell of human life almost indefinitely, and a society devoting a hugely disproportionate and growing share of its resources to the final weeks of a person's life. Unfortunately, Mr. Kass only succeeds in confusing and obscuring the difficult problems he addresses.

For example, he states: "It is now fashionable, in many aspects of public life, to demand what one wants or needs as a matter of rights," a statement few readers of COMMENTARY would question, but he uses this in an attempt to discredit those who believe that a person has a right to end his own life. . . . He goes on to say that it is then only a "small step" from the claimed right to die to claim the right to have others assist the dying process if one cannot do the job oneself. Further, it is then, according to Mr. Kass, an easy step to have proxies empowered to claim another's right to die on behalf of one incapable of understanding and deciding the issue.

These "small" and "easy" steps are great and difficult steps morally, as Mr. Kass surely knows. And he must also know that people claiming the right to choose to die are not trendy liberal inventors of a new sociopolitical right. They are, instead, supporters of an honorable belief system as old as human civilization itself that holds that a man's life belongs to him by right, that once born into this world, it is a man's right to live, to seek fulfillment, and, by his free choice, to cease to live. One may disagree with this position as one may disagree on the quite different questions as to when, if ever, a second party has the right to prolong another's life against his will or to end it without his consent. What Mr. Kass fails to do is to discuss these issues on their own merits. Instead, he dismisses all possibility of thoughtful discourse: "No one bothers very much about where these putative rights come from or what makes them right, and simple reflection will show that many of them are incoherent."

My own impression is that the existence and nature of the putative right is the central issue in the problem we face, and that it is at the very heart of serious discussions we hear everywhere concerning the right of physicians or relatives to "pull the plug" on life-support equipment under certain circumstances; the use of "living wills" to prevent being kept alive artificially under circumstances where one would want death; the rights and wrongs of "mercy killing"; and many related issues. What I found incoherent was Mr. Kass's convoluted demonstration to prove that murder is wrong through biblical references, and then his proceeding to why he thinks the assisting of death is murder. Are those struggling with these problems really helped by being told that "moral notions trace back to biblical religion"? (Many of us would say that biblical religion traces back to the evolution of human morality.) And are we helped by being told that the Sixth Commandment heads the second table; or that the human prohibition against murder traces back to God's announcement after the Flood that "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed . . . [Genesis 9.6]"? *Is* COMMENTARY *now into giving* Bible lessons?

Few would deny Leon Kass's right as a physician to refuse to be a party to euthanasia. To do so would violate his moral and religious convictions. Further, it is surely difficult to specify who should have a right to euthanize and under what safeguards. At the same time, it seems very wrong to me to continue forced interventions by others to sustain artificially a life that lacks evidence of, and shows little prospect of gaining, or gaining back, the human qualities of thought, volition, or symbolic communication. If medical science becomes able to preserve such lives for a hundred years, would Mr. Kass favor doing so? If not, exactly where would he draw the line, and why?

It is time we accepted the responsibility for deciding when to end *some* lives. Our debate needs to focus on when, how, and by whom the responsibility should be exercised. The Bible doesn't tell us.

CHARLES R. KELLEY
Vancouver, Washington

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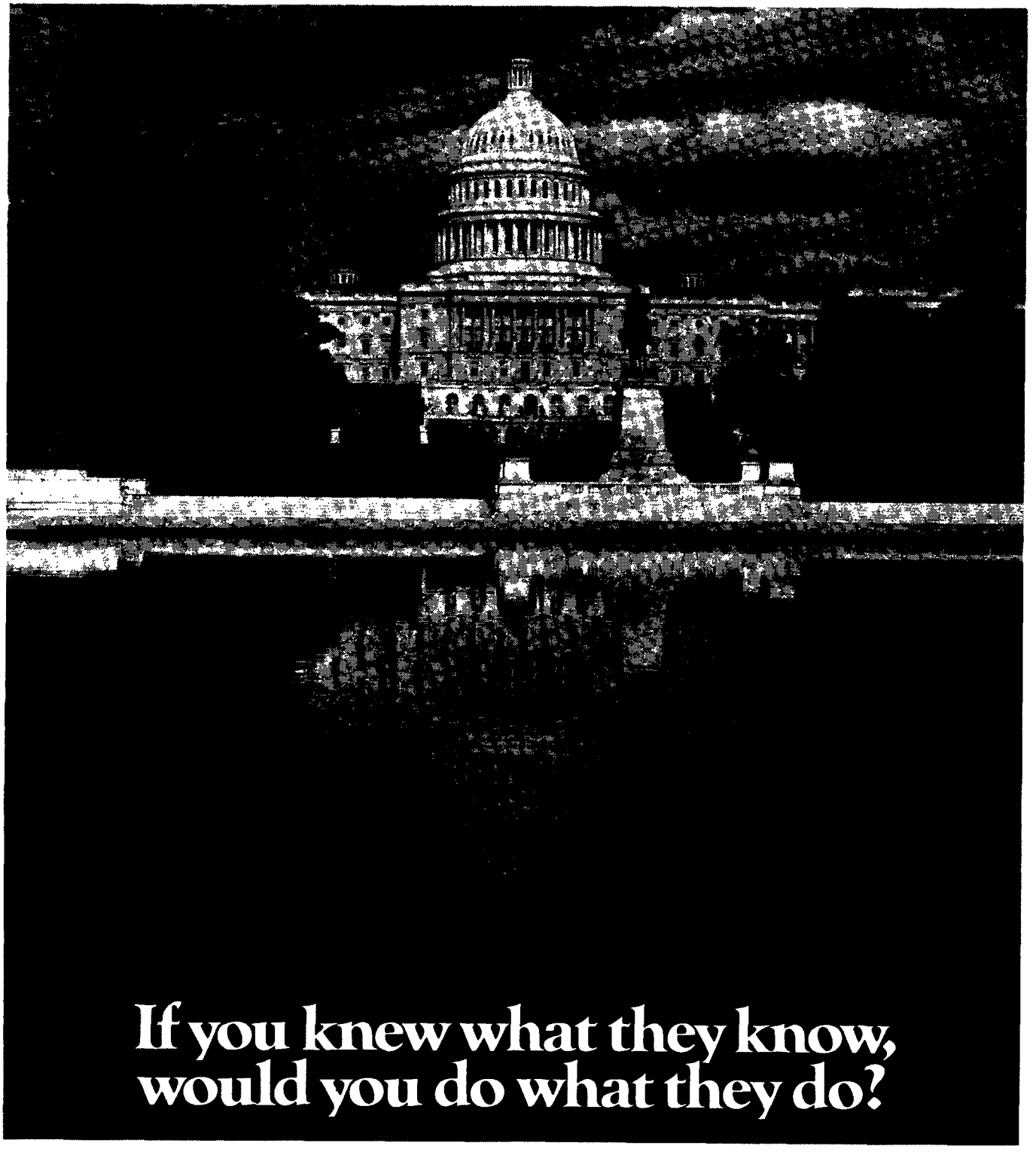

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Leon R. Kass emphasizes the distinction between "letting die" and deliberate killing. Those who equate the two, he says, "polarize" the debate over euthanasia and assisted suicide. Let us put this to the test of an example. *A*, in the heart of a desert, comes upon *B*, who is dying of thirst. *A* gives *B* no share of his own plentiful supply of water, and watches passively until *B* is dead. *A*'s defense: "I did not murder *B*, but merely let nature take its course. There is no law requiring one to provide treatment in such a case." Whatever the legal status of this claim may be, I fail to see any moral distinction between *A*'s inaction and the alternate course of killing *B* by shooting him.

Mr. Kass notes that even pagans and atheists believe that murder is wrong, and he asks, "Why is murder wrong?" He answers in a footnote: ". . . murder, which is, by definition, unjust or wrongful killing." His next assertion thus reduces to the statement that everyone knows wrongful killing to be wrong, immediately and without argument. This is true, but we need not ask ourselves why. We have equally true, and equally trivial, knowledge of every tautology.

Substantial questions, not resolvable by mere definition, can be raised. Why are some killings classified as murder while others are not? Why should they be thus classified? Mr. Kass does, in effect, pose such questions. In doing so, he says that capital punishment and killing in war or for self-defense are not instances of murder, but declines to argue about these exceptions. This abstention is tactically expedient because the exceptions are embarrassing when placed beside his other claims. Each human life, he tells us, is in itself respectable; all persons have an equal humanity, an equal worth, and a divine-like status, so that any man's very being requires that we respect his life. How, then, do we justify wholesale slaughter carried out in the name of patriotism or national sovereignty? ("Respect the godlike; do not shed its blood!" says Mr. Kass.) This is a mystery incomprehensible to Philistines like me. Incongruities and outright contradictions, it seems, become mere "difficulties," or vanish entirely, when one's thinking is supernaturally inspired.

Concerning the treatment of dying patients, Mr. Kass affirms "the primacy of easing pain and suffering." This implies, presumably, that he regards as permissible the administration of pain-relieving drugs. Their use, however (when it succeeds), removes the opportunity for an edifying display of courage, endurance, dignity, and self-command, traits which he commends as the best indicators of what a man is made of. One who is in a drugged stupor cannot "preserve and reaffirm his humanity by seeing clearly and without illusion." Anesthesia, when first introduced, was opposed by some divines for essentially the same reasons. Whatever one may think of them, they were consistent.

David A. Shotwell
Alpine, Texas

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leon R. Kass rightly states that the taking of human life by society or an indivdual is moral in some situations. He then argues that under no circumstances does euthanasia meet the morality criterion. One of his major objections is that choosing death is not consonant with the concept of human freedom because it is an option to end all options and thus constrains human choices.

When Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death!" was he constraining his choices? Does a soldier who chooses to die to save his comrades constrain his choices? What of the person who willingly jumps off an overloaded lifeboat to allow others to survive? Mr. Kass may argue that in these examples the overriding social and humanitarian benefits outweigh the individual loss of freedom. Does he not recognize that there surely are circumstances in which the scales of morality similarly favor euthanasia?

Sylvan Gollin
Claremont, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was very moved by Leon R. Kass's concern for the dignity of the dying, . . . but the question of dignity has a number of other facets. . . . For example, there is a certain lack of dignity involved in bed-panning brain-dead individuals over a period of years. . . . What about the dignity of the person asked to perform such duties for someone abandoned by family and friends, who is no longer even being visited, as is often the case? If ever there was a hopeless task, this is it. Is it dignified to expect a human being to perform acts that have no real purpose? . . . Is there dignity in a physician's spending time and energy serving the inanimate animate, . . . converting hospitals into living mortuaries warehousing the almost dead?

It is not a pleasant thought, but modern technology has made living past a certain point unbearable for the dying as well as for their survivors. This is a fact we must deal with. There is a limit to how much society can afford to provide, . . . especially when there is so much need in other areas.

Jerome Greenblatt
Laguna Hills, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leon R. Kass eloquently discusses the tension inherent in the two concepts of "death with dignity" and "the sanctity of life." Mr. Kass correctly notes that the push to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia springs, at least in part, from two key aspects of contemporary culture: denial of death and illness, and a desire to control everything by technical means. One may speculate that these twin characteristics betray a fear of being out of control, resulting in attempts to retain (or at least appear to retain) control even in the face of death, the final proof that we are not in control. In a secular society, life and health become ends in themselves, so that feeling good comes to replace (and to be mistaken for) doing good. If life has no meaning beyond itself, then loss of life or health becomes terrifying indeed, and this fear tends to be projected onto the patient. It then becomes difficult to discern whether we wish to hasten his death in order to relieve his suffering or our own.

Some time ago, I attended a seminar at which assisted suicide and euthanasia were discussed. Present were faculty physicians, medical students, nurses, social workers, administrators, and a professor of bioethics. Various opinions were expressed, but those who spoke in opposition voiced only practical objections. Not one speaker mentioned any source of ethical principles, such as the Ten Commandments or the Hippocratic Oath ("I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel"). Recently, assisted suicide and euthanasia were dis-

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cussed in two prestigious medical journals. The authors referred to no external source of ethical principles, although a public-opinion poll was mentioned. Apparently neither the authors nor the editors found anything amiss in basing life-and-death ethical decisions on a public-opinion poll.

What can be expected from a society that combines denial of death and illness with ethical illiteracy? Before the end of this decade, barring a therapeutic miracle, AIDS will have increased to the point where all available hospital beds will be occupied. What will happen when Mr. and Mrs. Moral Relativist try to admit their favorite uncle to the hospital because of chest pains, only to be told that there is a three-month waiting list? What will happen when Mr. and Mrs. Secular Humanist need to admit their young child to the hospital because of a high fever, but fear to do so because most of the pediatrics beds are occupied by children with AIDS?

I predict that assisted suicide will be "encouraged" for AIDS patients at earlier and earlier stages of the disease; when this proves insufficient, involuntary euthanasia will be proposed. This proposal will be favored by "mainline" religious denominations and liberals (for compassionate reasons), by conservatives (for fiscal reasons), by civil libertarians and loose interpreters of the Constitution (for privacy reasons), and by proponents of New Age theology (for whatever reasons). However, I predict that the proposal will be strongly opposed by fundamentalist Protestants, devout Catholics, observant Jews, and strict interpreters of the Constitution—in short, by those whom gays and AIDS patients now perceive as enemies, but whose beliefs are founded on something more permanent and substantial than public opinion.

[Dr.] David C. Stolinsky
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Thank the Lord for the sweet reasonableness, patience, and wisdom of Leon R. Kass. I have not read elsewhere so winning a defense against euthanasia.

There seems to be no more important work right now than stemming the grim advance of the choose-death crowd against both of life's flanks. Mr. Kass is a mighty defender.

At the unborn flank, at least, few argue that babies would be "better off dead," . . . but when it comes to the senior flank practically all "view with alarm" how "unpleasant" old age is (shades of the Buddha!), not crediting that most of us senior parties will continue to view it as better than the alternative right up to the red-hot end.

Tom White
Odessa, Texas

Leon R. Kass writes:

It was not my intent, in "Death With Dignity and the Sanctity of Life" to help anyone try to solve the terribly difficult, complicated, and distressing practical problems so many of us face regarding the care of the terminally or hopelessly ill. On the contrary, I wanted to show why we should oppose those who offer to "simplify" matters by euthanizing them away, especially when they defend this final technical solution for our enfeeblement in the name of human dignity. My argument did indeed reach firm opposition to the practice of so-called active euthanasia, the direct and intentional killing of patients who request death themselves or who are declared euthanizable by others because their lives are said to be "no longer worth living." But the article was mainly an exploration of our thinking and of two powerful notions—death with dignity; sanctity of life—notions which, in their putative opposition, now frame much of the debate about end-of-life decisions. It was motivated by my concern that sloganeering and sloppy thinking (about these notions and others) are doing great harm in this vexed and highly emotional matter. This concern, I regret to say, is thoroughly vindicated by the tone and reasoning of most of the letters printed above. They also show, alas, how little I have succeeded in producing clarification and in encouraging deeper reflection. Perhaps the following words of summary can ground more specific responses and even encourage a rereading of the original.

It is now fashionable to pit "sanctity of life" versus "quality of life" or versus "human dignity." As one learned commentator has put it: "The belief in the *sanctity of life* is the belief that each moment of biological life of every member of our species is of infinite value. . . . It stands in opposition . . . to most discussions of *death with dignity* which emphasize patient autonomy and quality of life rather than the sanctity of human life." But this view of "sanctity" seems to me too rigid and too shallow, and this view of a dignified death too narrow and abstract; accordingly, the polarized opposition between sanctity and dignity strikes me as spurious. My analysis sought to show that human dignity and the sanctity of life are not only compatible, but, if rightly understood, interdependent. Through a lengthy discussion of the reasons why murder is wrong—drawing in part on a philosophical reading of Genesis—I argued that the so-called *sanctity* of human life rests absolutely on the *dignity*—the god-like-ness—of human beings; but respect for that dignity requires also respect for the precarious bodily vessel upon which everything humanly high depends. The reason restraining the taking of innocent life lies not in the needs of society nor in our autonomous wills, but *in being itself*. Thus, human dignity—which, I argued, has largely to do with how we exercise the humanity that life makes possible and very little to do with pulling plugs or interrupting treatment—can in no way be enhanced by the practice of euthanasia. If euthanasia is to be defended, it must be on other grounds.

Charles R. Kelley makes a great deal of my very brief discussion of a so-called "right to die," not the subject of my essay. He claims that "the right to die" is supported by "an honorable belief system as old as human civilization itself that holds that a man's life belongs to him by right, that . . . it is a man's right to live . . . and, by his free choice, to cease to live." This is just not true. There may be very old views that defend the rightness or justness of suicide—though the view that I *own* my life *by right* is certainly not ancient—but they do not speak of "rights." "Rights"—certain permitted liberties—are an invention (or discovery) only of modern philosophy (since Hobbes). All natural rights trace home to the primary right-to-life, or better, the right of self-preservation, itself rooted in the powerful self-loving impulses and passions that seek our own continuance, and asserted first against those who might insist that morality requires me to turn the other cheek when my life is threatened. All the so-called natural or human

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rights presuppose our self-interested attachment to our own lives; for this reason, one cannot derive therefrom any "right to die" or a right to be made dead. Neither is there any constitutional basis for such a right. If it is to exist, it will have to be legislated, as a matter of positive law. To be sure, we can defend, on the ground of natural rights, a right to refuse treatment, to justify our wishes to escape from the clutches of those physicians who constrain our liberty, but a "right to become dead" or to be mercifully killed is a non sequitur—and incoherent. Argue if you must that it is *good* to allow someone the option of committing suicide or obtaining euthanasia, but do not say it is because he has a *right* to do so.

David A. Shotwell questions the distinction between "letting die" and "deliberately killing," and seeks to overturn it with his contrived example of the two men in the desert. But I am not persuaded. I agree that refusal to give water to a man dying of thirst is morally reprehensible, but not therefore morally identical to shooting him. The distinction turns in part on an analysis of causation, in part on a consideration of intention—both of which are relevant to *moral* no less than to legal judgment. More to the point, the desert example does not capture the medical situation. The dying patient cannot be restored to health (by water or penicillin or anything else), though his dying can be aggravated by burdensome or useless or unwelcome interventions. To cease from these interventions, in the name of the patient's good, is utterly different from intentionally putting an end to the patient altogether.

Mr. Shotwell (and Mr. Kelley) misunderstand why and how I explore the question of murder and how I use the Bible. If one seeks to understand the notion "sanctity of life"—and to rescue it from the reductionist view that would have us treat every heartbeat in the permanently comatose as having "infinite value"—one looks properly at reasons why we are enjoined from violating human life. We do so not because, having discovered why murder is wrong, we can more easily condemn euthanasia, but because we can more readily evaluate any alleged reasons for ignoring the *prima-facie* case against bloodshed. (Please, Mr. Shotwell, do not try to pin on me a defense of "wholesale slaughter," in the name of patriotism or anything else. Just-war theorists have wrestled for years with the difficult task of justifying any such exception to the respect owed equally to all human life, including that of one's "enemies.") As it happens, the Bible read philosophically can help us to understand why and how human beings come to protect and respect human life—and great thinkers, such as Rousseau and Kant, have drawn on the book of Genesis for identical arguments. To treat this repository of wisdom as "religious" and hence as purely sectarian, and to claim (mockingly) that thinking with the Bible must be "supernaturally inspired" is indeed Philistinism. I continue to insist that arguments I made with the Bible's help do not rest on biblical or divine authority, and I invite my critics to try to show the arguments wrong, by counter-argument, not insult.

I am grateful to Mr. Shotwell for his last comment, showing the tension between the desire to relieve pain and suffering and the desire to uphold the prospects for dignity and self-command, possibilities that not only pain but also drugs can undermine. But whereas Mr. Shotwell wants consistency, I would rather acknowledge the dilemma and insist on the need for prudent judgment of the man-on-the-spot. How bad is the pain? What is its cause? How strong is the soul? What is the prognosis? What does the patient himself want? Only answers to these and other concrete questions can help decide how much medication to give, and how often. Yet even if, sadly, extensive narcosis is called for, it is done with the patient's good in view. In contrast, one cannot serve the patient's good by deliberately eliminating the patient. No benefits without a beneficiary.

This leads me to Sylvan Gollin's concern about choice. I share with him an admiration for noble self-sacrifice, and can easily conceive of someone removing himself from life for *someone else's benefit*—say, to spare my children the anguish of years of attending my demented self and the horrible likelihood that they will come, hatefully to themselves, to resent my continued existence. But noble self-sacrifice is rare, ignoble "other-sacrifice" is common. For this reason, the legal alternative of euthanasia will not, in the aggregate, enhance choice but will constrain it—especially regarding the care and attention given to the elderly, the seriously ill, the vulnerable. Precisely because we now know that we cannot kill them, we are able to search out the best possible ways to relate to them, humanly speaking. What would happen, any time the going gets tough, were death to be a "viable treatment option"? Will this really increase the freedom—and hence the dignity—of these vulnerable folks?

Jerome Greenblatt sees the point but rejects it. Instead, he worries about the "dignity" of family and physicians and nurses and hospitals having to attend to "inanimate animates." I share his concern for the trend toward "warehousing the living dead," but reject the implication that killing them off is the solution. His rather casual extension, without argument, of the notion of "dignity" has at least this virtue: he makes it crystal clear who is to be benefited by any move to euthanasia. His rather frank appeal to the interests of *others* should warn us of the danger of self-deception. I repeat a major conclusion: "We must never seek to relieve *our own* frustrations and bitterness over the lingering deaths of others by pretending that we can kill them to sustain *their dignity*."

I thank David C. Stolinsky and Tom White for their support.

Hutchins of Chicago

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph Epstein's insightful article on the career of Robert Maynard Hutchins ["The Sad Story of the Boy Wonder," March] misses the larger meaning and achievement of Hutchins's career, apparently because Mr. Epstein, though not an academic, operates from the standard academic viewpoint. Mr. Epstein says that by 1966 Hutchins "was . . . intellectually quite dead," though "a splendid corpse." By "intellectually dead" Mr. Epstein seems to mean that Hutchins did no disciplinary research. But Hutchins was never (unless for a period in the 1920's at Yale Law School) alive by this measure. He was an educator, which to him meant a broadly educated person whose task was the integration of existing knowledge and its dissemination to guide social change, all the while asking fundamental questions of everything in sight.

When the American university world proved to be unwaveringly committed to compartmentaliza-

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tion of inquiry and discourse-clogging jargon, Hutchins established the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, which had a twenty-year run. Mr. Epstein says of this phase of Hutchins's career that "it was not even a good idea, not for a minute." A sounder view is that the Center, consuming rather than producing academic research, and dedicated to a no-jargon discussion followed by its application to contemporary problems, was a promising and visionary idea. As I know from involvement in its later years, as Program Director from 1976 to 1980, it was a project not well-executed in a world in which most brain-power is still mobilized by universities hostile to the generalist educator. Hutchins to the end was the latter, always intellectually alive and enlivening for those who took the application of knowledge as seriously as its production.

OTIS L. GRAHAM, JR.
University of California
Santa Barbara, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In "The Sad Story of the Boy Wonder," Joseph Epstein portrays Robert Maynard Hutchins as a glamorous failure whose hubris prevented him from living up to the potential of his great natural gifts. To that end, Mr. Epstein employs a tendentious selection of evidence from *Unseasonable Truths*, Harry S. Ashmore's balanced, thoroughly documented biography of Hutchins. . . .

Mr. Epstein, who entered the University of Chicago five years after Hutchins departed, says that he "always felt that the aspects of the university I most appreciated were owing to Hutchins's twenty-one year tenure as its head." These benefits were provided by an undergraduate college whose curriculum had been reshaped to conform to Hutchins's insistence that it be devoted to education in the liberal arts. What its graduates had in common, Mr. Epstein found, "was a certain breadth of intellectual ambition behind which lay, I believe, the figure of Robert Hutchins."

Hutchins would have considered that an accolade. But Mr. Epstein, recovering from what in context seems an act of contrition, then goes on to debunk what he calls the "myth" of Hutchins's impact on the institution. He was, he says, "wrong, or even irrelevant about so

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much that was important in education." In a derogatory comparison with Chicago's first president, William Rainey Harper, he concludes:

> . . . there was this decisive difference between Harper and Hutchins: the former was a scholar who knew that the soul of a great university is in scholarship, while the latter was at best someone for whom the world of scholarship was, if not alien, then certainly foreign territory.

This seems an odd verdict to render on one who consorted with most of the world's leading scholars during the years he served as law-school dean, university president, encyclopedist, editor of *Great Books of the Western World*, and foundation executive. Hutchins earned the respect of some of the most eminent of these, along with the enmity of some of equal stature. In the case of the latter, however, this had more to do with ideology than with scholarship.

And that, I think, is the key to Mr. Epstein's derision. In the years between the world wars, when many of the most influential intellectuals were bemused by Marx and Freud, Hutchins was an unswerving advocate of the libertarian values embodied in the Bill of Rights. At the same time, he insisted that those values were being undermined by the excesses of laissez-faire capitalism. Russian Communism, he asserted, "is simply the prolongation of capitalist materialism."

This position pitted Hutchins against the spirit of the age, and it was anathema to the radical Left and the radical Right. Some of those who now call themselves neoconservatives turned up in both camps as they abandoned the Marxist faith and converted to anti-Communism after the Soviet-Nazi pact. They were conspicuous among those who condemned Hutchins when he led the charge against McCarthyism in the post-war years. Mr. Epstein ignores Hutchins's role in the epic struggle to end the infamous congressional witchhunt. Indeed, he dismisses the whole of Hutchins's post-Chicago career as an exercise in futility: ". . . in anything resembling solid achievement it all came to damnably little."

As Ashmore's biography demonstrates, Hutchins's efforts at the Ford Foundation, the Fund for the Republic, and the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions were devoted to furthering the concept that motivated him from the beginning—"the faith that Americans, given time and a proper education, might yet create a truly democratic polity within the framework of their republican constitution.". . .

Hutchins insisted that democratic government required a citizenry educated to appreciate and uphold the values of freedom and justice embodied in the nation's founding documents. But to Mr. Epstein this concern for "education for democracy, education for leisure, education for freedom" is an absurdity: "There is something particularly hopeless about such subjects, and Hutchins was too clever a man not to recognize it."

He characterizes as charades the great international convocations Hutchins organized to break through the diplomatic stalemate of the cold-war years: ". . . sad, thin stuff—all of it talk, talk, talk, and so little of it good talk." I suggest that subsequent events have demonstrated that these forums represented an essential approach to the fundamental issues that divided East and West, and that had gone unattended while the great powers indulged in an ultimately destructive nuclear arms race.

Hutchins launched his effort to open an international dialogue in the wake of Pope John's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, which recognized coexistence as the basic requirement of peace. . . . To pursue that opening, he brought together in New York and Geneva leading intellectuals from both sides of the iron curtain for their first open exchange on the moral aspects of the confrontation betwen the great powers. This talk, talk, talk marked the beginning of the process that culminated this month when Moscow and the Holy See announced resumption of the diplomatic relationship broken off by the Russian Revolution.

Ashmore notes that Hutchins began with the conviction that dialogue was the necessary means of opening the minds and enhancing the intellectual powers of students, and in the end came to see it as indispensable to civilization itself. It may turn out, as Mr. Epstein insists, that all this was beside the point. But the rush of events since Hutchins's death should entitle him to the hearing usually denied a prophet in his own time.

As we finally come to the end of the East-West stalemate and face the uncertain new world emerging in its wake, I suggest that your readers would do well to appraise *Unseasonable Truths* for themselves. . . .

MAURICE B. MITCHELL
Montecito, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agree with Joseph Epstein that Harry S. Ashmore's biography of Robert Maynard Hutchins is somewhat lacking in focus and judgment. But I disagree with Mr. Epstein's frequently negative assessment of Hutchins's role as president of the University of Chicago. . . .

Hutchins saw clearly that the most important role for a great university is education in the liberal arts and sciences at the undergraduate level. This is as true today as it was in the 1930's. Hutchins knew what many university presidents perceive—that a large part of the campus funding for research and graduate programs is wasted on outmoded or inconsequential programs and that this lush funding of graduate and research programs is just hostage money that the university president pays out to retain the political support of the academic magnates. Meanwhile, undergraduate students and their fee-paying parents are cheated, and the quality of college instruction falls far below its potential. Hutchins was not unique in this perception, but he was extremely rare, almost unique among the presidents of major universities, in acting courageously and persistently on it, and giving priority to the undergraduate college at the University of Chicago.

Mr. Epstein's article is peculiar and his argument is inconsistent. On the one hand, he praises the wonderful education he got in the undergraduate college at the University of Chicago, but at the same time he perpetuates the vicious attacks on Hutchins concocted by the academic feudatories in the traditional departments who wanted to continue their wasteful and corrupt ways of giving priority to redundant research and graduate programs at the expense of the quality of undergraduate education. The situation today on the American campus is no different from what it was in Hutchins's day and that is why Hutchins's stand in favor of undergraduate education remains exemplary.

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Hutchins was also right in seeing the necessity of integrative studies in a core curriculum. Again, many university presidents have talked about such a program. But Hutchins was the only one to put such a program into effect as a mandatory curriculum for all undergraduates in a major university that had the quality of faculty to make the integrative core curriculum maximally effective. Hutchins also saw that the only way such a program could be conducted was to give a large measure of autonomy to the college in hiring and retention of faculty, separate from the resources of the baronial departments at the university in graduate school and at the research level.

It was the diversion of resources to the undergraduate college at Chicago, away from the traditional academic baronies, that vehemently aroused many faculty against Hutchins, much more than his educational philosophy. Mr. Epstein fails to mention this key point of Chicago academic politics.

Hutchins also saw clearly more than a half-century ago what has become evident in the past fifteen-to-twenty years—the intellectual stagnation and moral bankruptcy of the social sciences, particularly sociology and social anthropology. Again Mr. Epstein misses Hutchins's astonishing foresight. Hutchins realized in the 1930's that once the sociologists had gathered a full set of data on industrial society, and once social anthropology had done the same for pre-modern societies, there would be very little left for these then-exalted disciplines, in which the University of Chicago had invested so heavily, to do. He has been proved right over time. Now obsolete as useful data-gatherers, the social scientists spend their time in ideological polemics. . . .

I would like to add a brief memoir of my one personal encounter with Hutchins—in the summer of 1967, when I was teaching history at Brandeis University. For reasons I do not know, Hutchins hired me as a consultant to the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that was then being planned by him and Mortimer Adler. He had me read my way through all the major history articles in the then-existing edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (many of which went back to the famous eleventh British edition early in the century) and fly out to Santa Barbara for two days and give him an assessment of their quality and usefulness in the prospective new edition.

At the time I had the same arrogant and cynical attitude to Hutchins that most academics held and which is unfortunately perpetuated in Mr. Epstein's article. My preconceptions about Hutchins were shattered after a few minutes of conversation with him. It turned out he too had read those articles and wanted to compare notes with a professional historian. I was astounded by the depth of his historical learning and the insightful precision and persuasiveness of his judgment. He had separately come to the conclusion that nearly all the history articles were obsolete and had to be replaced. I came away from Santa Barbara . . . with the conviction that Hutchins was as brilliant and learned a person as I had ever encountered.

The supercilious tone of Mr. Epstein's article, trailing the aroma of long-dead academic politics in Hyde Park, does not do justice to this great educator and academic leader who was, along with Charles Eliot of Harvard, the finest and most courageous university president this country ever had before 1950.

NORMAN F. CANTOR
Department of History
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein's "The Sad Story of the Boy Wonder" brought back many memories, some warm and others painful. No record of Hutchins's life, however, should omit mentioning his greatest single achievement: bringing Leo Strauss to the University of Chicago in 1949. . . . If Hutchins's life was one of sadly unfulfilled promise, he was at least instrumental in forwarding at a vital moment the career of a man of whom it might be said that he fulfilled promises of which none of his contemporaries had even dreamed.

The work of Leo Strauss—the Robert M. Hutchins Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago—is today attracting more attention than it did in his lifetime. The unparalleled venom with which Strauss has been attacked—e.g., in the pages of the *New York Review of Books* and in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement*—is a measure of how profoundly he has challenged the unexamined premises underlying the received opinions of our times. He has challenged the idea of progress—the idea of the superiority of modernity to antiquity—as profoundly as Rousseau or Nietzsche or Heidegger. Unlike them, however, he did not end by radicalizing the claims he had challenged. If Strauss does not always dazzle us, it is because he taught us to learn to listen to the still small voices of the wise men of old, and to avoid being deafened by loud-speakers.

It is one of the supreme ironies of our time that Hutchins went on in the years after 1949 to become the advocate of some of the wildest kinds of modern utopianism, and especially that of world government. But the Hutchins Professor, in these same years, taught us that the cultivation of wisdom—the highest human good—is not the same thing as the radical reform of society, and that the soberest and most moderate politics is the best politics. He was, therefore, the enemy of every kind of political utopianism, and especially of world government.

Since COMMENTARY had the high honor in June 1967 of publishing a version of Strauss's lectures on "Jerusalem and Athens," I thought that his relationship—however spare—with the late Robert Maynard Hutchins ought not to go unmentioned here.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont, California

Russia's New Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with interest your recent article, "'There Go Our Little Jews'" by David G. Roskies [April]. . . . Both the American and the Russian Jewish communities know little about each other's real lives. Only recently, with the increased openness in Soviet-American relations, has there been a certain amount of progress in this area. One indicator of such progress was the visit to Kiev this past January of the two American Jewish educators, David G. Roskies and Peysach Fiszman, which is so vividly described by Mr. Roskies in his article. I would like to look at that remarkable event from the perspective not of New York but of Moscow.

For the past twenty years the American view of the problems of Soviet Jews (a view which more or less corresponded to the real situation) has been rather one-dimen-

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sional: a small group of heroes fighting the Communist leviathan for the right to emigrate, since only through emigration could they maintain their Jewish identity; all Jews who remained in Russia were doomed, sooner or later, to disappear as a national group. There was no question what Jewish identity meant; it would manifest itself in one of the ways familiar to Western Jewry. Soviet Jewish activists therefore strove to adopt one of the Western models of such identity, either religious or secular. . . .

Be that as it may, we now face a situation different from the one of twenty, ten, five years ago. There are now new leaders and new activists in numerous Jewish cultural societies who come from a different background and have a different orientation in their Jewish activities. It is not the refusenik who is now the central figure in Soviet Jewry but the cultural activist. Though he may not be quite so attractive a figure as his predecessor was to Western eyes, nevertheless, he and his fellows have succeeded in achieving great progress over the last two years. It would have been impossible, for example, to organize the visit of the two teachers described by Mr. Roskies in his article without the efforts of these Kiev activists. On its own, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education would not have cared so much about training Yiddish teachers.

These new activists are not as grounded in and receptive to Western ideas and values—in both the general and the Jewish senses—as the former leaders were, but I daresay they represent a truer mirror of the views and values of the 1.5 million Jewish population in the Soviet Union than the previous small group of refuseniks did.

Their shortcomings are evident, but what about their virtues? As Mr. Roskies remarks, Kiev Jews remind him of the world of Sholem Aleichem's stories. And indeed one of the most obvious features of Sholem Aleichem's heroes was perhaps their creativity and ability to respond to a changing situation. (This creativity does not necessarily always achieve positive results, but that is another problem.) In my opinion this new generation of Soviet Jewish activists has more of that vivid Jewish creative spirit than did the former one, whose outlook was determined primarily by Western examples and standards. Today, Jews in the Soviet Union must be especially active and inventive because they face a serious challenge. Their future depends on their ability to find a right way *now*.

This does not mean, of course, that Soviet Jews have nothing to learn from their American cousins. On the contrary, we need to use every possible opportunity to acquire more knowledge about Judaism in all of its aspects, but we must keep in mind that nobody has an immediate recipe for solving our problems. I believe that the solution is to be found only by collaborating with the West, but not by copying Western models. In these endeavors we may not neglect any kind of Jewish experience—whether positive or negative. Perhaps American Jews are only now beginning to get acquainted with the true life and history of Russian Jewry. Mr. Roskies's article is a first step in this direction.

MICHAEL KRUTIKOV
Moscow, USSR

DAVID G. ROSKIES writes:

I sympathize with Michael Krutikov's distaste for a McDonald's Judaism—mass-produced, prepackaged, and utterly foreign to the native palate. Yet what alternative is there when Jewish communal life has been destroyed in the Soviet Union, when Jewish creativity in Russian and Hebrew has been stifled for sixty years, and when God, the Torah, and all national aspirations have been expunged from Yiddish books, songs, and plays? One alternative is to translate into Russian the best of the East European Jewish cultural heritage, which is precisely what Mr. Krutikov and his friends have been doing since April 1989 in the journal *VEK*, published in Riga. But in the Ukraine, where an estimated half-a-million Jews still live, Ukrainian nationalists are eager to foster Jewish creativity in any language *other than* Russian. As the sovereignty movement gains ground throughout the USSR, a journal like *VEK* would then have to appear in about a dozen different "national" languages.

All things being equal (which of course they aren't), such interethnic rivalries might advance the position of Yiddish as the unifying language of the Jews. I shall not repeat here how saddened my experience teaching Yiddish in Kiev left me on that score. Since Yiddish without *Yiddishkayt* is a doomed enterprise (even if its main exponents had not been murdered by Stalin), the massive reeducation of Soviet Jews in classical and modern Hebrew remains the only untried possibility. Were such a messianic project to be carried out, it would require thousands of trained teachers from the West and Israel, millions of imported texts and textbooks (how many Hebrew typesetters are currently employed in the Soviet publishing industry?). In short, all available resources would have to be imported.

Meanwhile, of course, large numbers of Soviet Jews will continue voting with their feet, in much the same way as did the Jews in Sholem Aleichem's fiction before them. They are choosing their guaranteed freedoms in the brave new world over fighting for a cultural, political, and economic foothold in the old.

Middle East Options

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Can the Palestinians Make Peace?" [April], Daniel Pipes comes to the unavoidable conclusion that there can be only one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, he goes even farther, by stating that to think otherwise is "either naive or duplicitous."

I certainly agree with Mr. Pipes's cogent and well-reasoned arguments, but if one follows his logic, all present and putative negotiations that could lead to a binational solution are naive or duplicitous. What is more, any argument for territorial withdrawal by Israel falls into these categories. Mr. Pipes, however, like many of Israel's most articulate and realistic supporters, stops short of using the "A" word—annexation of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

The objection most often cited to the annexation of these territories is the so-called "demographic time bomb"—the argument that the Arab population is growing so fast that by the end of the century, Arabs will no longer be a minority in Israel. From this argument, the naive and the duplicitous conjure visions ranging from Israel's loss of its Jewish character, to the specter of "apartheid and fascism." Fortunately, two facts easily dispose of this argument. First, the census of Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza

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demonstrates that the population has not grown rapidly, and, in fact, has leveled off and even dropped in recent years. Although relatives living abroad are listed as members of their respective households, since 1967, the Arab population of the territories has grown by 200,000 persons—hardly the "explosion" that was feared. Second, the anticipated influx of Russian Jews which, by some estimates, will reach one million by the end of the decade, would clearly offset even a sudden spurt in the growth of the Arab population.

Why not argue the case for annexation, since all other solutions are impossible? Annexation could include limited autonomy for the Arabs, a solution that even human-rights groupies would agree could bring Israel's Arabs a degree of freedom and a standard of living not available in any other Middle Eastern nation. It also seems to be the only solution which is compatible with Israel's survival.

RUTH KING

New York City

DANIEL PIPES writes:

Ruth King admonishes me to the effect that the logic of my argument implies Israeli annexation of the West Bank. Well, maybe my argument leads her to that conclusion, but it doesn't take me there. There are two principal reasons.

First: Mrs. King correctly raises demographics as a central issue—but then proceeds to give incorrect figures. In fact, the Arab population in the occupied territories has increased from almost exactly a million in 1967 to over a million and a half today. A 56-percent increase in one generation sounds like a population "explosion" to me.

Further, the increase in Arab residents would have been much greater except that so many people emigrated to take advantage of the opportunities created by the oil boom. But the economic downturn in the Middle East means that emigration has declined precipitously, and there is no reason to expect it to resume. As for the influx of Soviet Jews, like Arab emigration, it provides a one-time-only boost to the Jewish population.

In the long term, what counts are underlying birth rates, and these are overwhelmingly in the Arabs' favor. According to a 1981 estimate, Muslim women living under Israeli control average 6.6 children per woman. If there is to be a flat-out demographic contest between Arabs and Jews west of the Jordan River, Mrs. King, surely you would join me in putting your money on the former.

But demographics is not all; politics also count. Most of the two million Arabs living under Israeli control execrate the Jewish state. Therefore, I ask of Mrs. King and those who think like her: of what benefit is it to them or to Israel that they become citizens of Israel? Put differently, is not Israel's first priority to be a Jewish state, with the exact nature of its territory to be determined by the exigencies of this goal? Or is the point to skip over two thousand years and control the lands of an ancient kingdom?

The Lebanese example should caution expansion-minded Israelis: the Maronites had a choice seventy years ago between a small but overwhelmingly Maronite state or a large, diluted one. Foolishly, they pushed for the latter. For fifty-five years, they could delude themselves into thinking they had made the right decision, but in 1975 the Muslims finally sought control of Lebanon. Fifteen years of civil war have exposed the futility of the Maronite choice; and there is no reason to think that an analogous Jewish choice would fare better.

As an American analyst I am always cautious about advising foreign states what to do. That said, here are some of my own thoughts about the situation. I reject three options—an independent Palestinian state (at least until all the Arab states make peace with Israel); Israeli annexation of the West Bank; and Israel's expulsion of Arabs living under its control. What does this leave? Not much. The ideal would be a voluntary exchange of populations, but that is exceedingly unlikely, if only because most Jews have already left their homes in Arab countries.

The only realistic solutions are old-fashioned and unsatisfactory: a West Bank under Jordanian control; a West Bank confederated with Jordan; a Jordanian-Israeli condominium in the West Bank. I propose these not out of enthusiasm but *faute de mieux*. The past century's experience suggests that virulent nationalism cannot be suppressed, except through the most brutal means. Ruling those out, I see nothing better than patched-together efforts that can be adjusted as need demands.

Was Chambers Right?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Why Whittaker Chambers Was Wrong" [April], Charles Horner concludes that the apparent demise of Communism proves that Whittaker Chambers was wrong when he asserted his belief that in breaking with Communism, he was leaving the winning side for the losing side.

Chambers considered Communism a symptom of the crisis of civilization, not the crisis itself. That crisis involved the question of faith in man or faith in God.

About his break with Communism, he wrote in *Witness*:

> What I had been fell from me like dirty rags. The rags . . . were not only Communism . . . [but] . . . the whole web of the materialist modern mind. . . . If I had rejected only Communism, I would have rejected only one political expression of the modern mind. . . . If I had rejected only Communism, I should have changed a faith; I would not have changed the force that made it possible.

In short, if all that the West has to send the shuffling masses in the East is a McDonald's franchise, then Charles Horner, not Whittaker Chambers, will have been proven wrong.

WILSON BUCHER

Columbia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is more than interesting to contrast the reviews devoted to our new collection of Whittaker Chambers's essays, *Ghosts on the Roof*, by Samuel Francis in *Chronicles*, and Charles Horner in COMMENTARY. Francis finds in Chambers's journalistic pieces a message that not only is terribly timely but "considerably diminished if it is mistaken for merely an account of Soviet Communism" in either armed or diplomatic war with the West. Mr. Horner, while devoting only scant notice to *Ghosts on the Roof* and concentrating instead on Chambers's spiritual memoir, *Witness*, simply declares Chambers to have been "wrong" in his belief that the West could not at last withstand the threat to its very life posed by Marxist-Leninists in the Kremlin. Mr. Horner bases his verdict on the as-yet-unproven (and, in the sense that informs Chambers's book, unprovable) proposition that the West

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generally, and the United States specifically, has defeated the Soviet Union in the great conflict of ideas, especially concerning governance (democracy) and economics (the free market versus state planning). Chambers would retort, as indeed in several pieces collected in *Ghosts on the Roof* he does retort, that there is more to the great confrontation between East and West than can be indicated by the proliferation of voting booths or McDonald's hamburgers.

Though it is easy to portray Chambers as merely an anti-Communist, Chambers himself insisted that he was a counterrevolutionary; he was counter not only, or even so much, to Communism *per se* as to certain essentially spiritual (and only secondarily political or economic) forces that he purported to discern in both East and West. Further, Chambers's writings remind us that the spiritual (or, if you prefer, ideological) enemies of Western civilization take many forms and locate themselves as readily in Muncie as in Moscow. Even if it could be demonstrated that the United States and its Western allies have somehow defeated Communism, we may yet face—in, for example, the idolatry being accorded democracy and prosperity these days—the most formidable of all the foes of the human spirit: what an earlier Chambersesque writer, Hilaire Belloc, termed the servile state. The outcome of that contest remains very much undecided.

DAVID A. BOVENIZER
Regnery Gateway, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Horner's article joins the chorus of cold-war victory celebrations now so ubiquitous. Unfortunately, it does not do justice to the main theme of Whittaker Chambers's life. Mr. Horner writes, "Chambers himself became one of the least acclaimed, most thoroughly reviled figures in postwar American life. Nor has he been rehabilitated. . . ." Why? Certainly the overwhelming majority of American intellectuals were not pro-Communist. Nor was it because of Chambers's past—probably not even the Hiss case. Numerous ex-Communists and former fellow travelers have played a prominent part in American life and continue to do so, including many who agreed with Chambers about Hiss. Why, then, was he so reviled?

Chambers himself gave an answer in his *Odyssey of a Friend—Letters to William F. Buckley, Jr.:*

> I am baffled by the way people still speak of the West as if it were at least a cultural unity against Communism though it is divided not only by a political, but by an invisible cleavage. On one side are the voiceless masses with their own subdivisions and fractures. On the other side is the enlightened, articulate elite which, to one degree or other, has rejected the religious roots of the civilization—the roots without which it is no longer Western civilization, but a new order of beliefs, attitudes and mandates. In short, this is the order of which Communism is one logical expression, originating not in Russia, but in the culture capitals of the West. . . . It is a Western body of beliefs that now threatens the West from Russia. As a body of Western beliefs, secular and rationalistic, the intelligentsia of the West share it, and are therefore always committed to a secret emotional complicity with Communism of which they dislike, not the Communism but only what, by the chances of history, Russia has specifically added to it—slave-labor camps, purges, MVD *et al.*

Chambers wrote in *Witness* that he had chosen the "losing side," but he did not mean by this the side of American citizenry against Communism. Chambers was writing about the essence of our civilization. "The enemy," he wrote, "is ourselves. That is why it is idle to talk about preventing the wreck of Western civilization. It is already a wreck from within."

It is interesting to note that another man with the same view of the West is now similarly treated. Solzhenhitsyn, too, was popular for a short time until he made it plain that he believes Communism is merely a symptom of our materialistic culture. It is interesting to observe that Solzhenitsyn's recently published novel, *August 1914—The Red Wheel,* was barely noticed by the media. . . . Like Chambers, he joins those "least acclaimed."

It is premature and probably presumptuous to talk about why Whittaker Chambers was "wrong." Let us remember that Persia, the scourge of Western civilization, abruptly collapsed and yielded not to Athens, but to the semi-barbarian Macedonians. (Unfortunately, Athens was not far behind its ancient enemy.) As we look at our drug-sodden cities, our porous frontiers, our inability to educate our children, our lack of internal security and the indifference of so many to our laws, surely we must have some doubts. Is it really true that "the relentless reality of America . . . somehow always manages to whittle them down"? Are we *sure* that Whittaker Chambers was wrong?

HENRY ADDIS
Westbury, New York

CHARLES HORNER writes:

The correspondents are correct in pointing out that, for Whittaker Chambers, Communism was but one manifestation of the West's fatal materialism. They are also right to note that we may yet succumb to one of these other corruptions, even though it seems that Khrushchev's prediction that we would all be living under Soviet-style Communism one day will not now be borne out. It is also true that there are enemies of civilization "in Muncie as in Moscow," even though this particular comparison is way out of balance. And finally, it is certainly true that there is (was?) more to the struggle between East and West than the "proliferation of voting booths or McDonald's hamburgers." But how much more? And are these not two good starting points for the East which, until recently, had neither?

The letters also remind us of how grudging has been the acceptance by both Left *and* Right of our recent successes—it is almost as if they resent them. The unity of these two opposites is well-represented by the emergence of McDonald's as the trans-political symbol of what ails Western civilization. The Left inveighs against non-biodegradable packaging, high-sodium fries, and high-fat burgers. (Here some care is necessary; the widow of McDonald's founder Ray Croc became a generous patron of left-wing causes.) The Right, meanwhile, complains that the East's imminent spiritual revival has been sidetracked by the new Muscovite passion for junk food. In fact, however, though the Big Mac may not be the best thing for body and soul and our natural environment, it is not exactly the worst, either.

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Western Civ—and Me

An Address at Harvard University

Allan Bloom

FELLOW ELITISTS:

If I were E.D. Hirsch, of "cultural literacy" fame—people do tend to mix us up—I might ask, "What is the literary influence on my salutation?" The answer is Franklin D. Roosevelt's salutation to another select audience, the Daughters of the American Revolution. He began his address, "Fellow Immigrants."

Roosevelt was gently ridiculing those ladies for believing that in America old stock constitutes any title whatsoever to privilege. That notion is a relic of the aristocratic past which this democracy supplanted in favor of equality or of privilege based on merit. Roosevelt was urbane and witty, this century's greatest virtuoso of democratic leadership. We, the immigrants or the children of immigrants, loved his act; he was on our side. Our enjoyment of his joke was enhanced by the acid of vengeance against those who thought they were better than we. F.D.R. knew how to manipulate such sentiments, and his slap at the D.A.R. was not entirely disinterested insofar as there were a lot more of us than there were of them.

Moreover, Roosevelt's enjoyment was quite different from ours. He was really one of them. His family's claims to antiquity, wealth, and distinction were as good as practically anyone's. It was certainly more pleasant to poke fun at his equals or inferiors than to show resentment toward his superiors. His was an aristocratic condescension. He condescended to rule in a democracy, to be, as was often said about him at the time, "a traitor to his class"—a neat mixture of man's perpetual striving to be first and the demands of a society where all are held to be equal. The psychology of democracy is complex and fascinating.

That psychology determined the very unusual intensity of the response to my book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, focusing on my alleged elitism. I was suspect as an enemy of our democratic regime. And the first and loudest voices in this chorus came from the Ivy League, particularly from those with some connection to Harvard. Everybody knows that Harvard is in every respect—its students, its faculty, its library, and its endowment—the best university in the world. Long ago when I, a Middle Westerner, taught for a year at Yale, I was amazed at the little Harvard worm that was eating away at the souls of practically all the professors and students there, except for the ones who had turned down the opportunity to be at Harvard. Elite is not a word I care for very much—it is imprecise and smacks of sociological abstraction—but if any American institution of any kind merits that name, it is Harvard, and it lends that tincture to everyone associated with it.

Why, then, this passion to accuse others of the crime of elitism? One is tempted to attribute it to simple self-protectiveness. "If we say *he* is one, they won't notice *us*." But I suspect some, or many, acted from a more tortuous, more ambiguous motive—guilt. The leading principle of our regime is the equal worth of all persons, and facts or sentiments that appear to contradict that principle are experienced by a democrat as immoral. Bad conscience accompanies the democrat who finds himself part of an elite. He tries to suppress or deny to himself whatever covert feelings he might experience—I am sure that none of you has had them—of delight or superiority in the fact that he has been distinguished by Harvard, that he is much better off than the poor jerks at Kalamazoo College, even that he deserves it, that superior gifts merit superior education, position, and esteem. A few might consciously believe such things, but since they would be at odds with the egalitarian opinions of democracy, they tend to become spiritual outlaws, hypocrites, and cynically indifferent to the only American principle of justice. The rest, to soothe their consciences, have to engage in casuistry, not to say sophistry.

The simple democratic answer would be open admissions, just as there would be if Harvard were located in Europe, where such elitism is less tolerated. But nobody here really considers that. Harvard, I gather, intends to remain adamantly exclusive, implying thereby that there are significant natural differences among human beings. President Derek Bok's way of squaring such elitism with democratic right-thinking has been, apparently, to teach that the Harvard person is a doer of good works for society as a whole. This is in the spirit of Harvard's own political philosopher, John Rawls, who permits people to possess

ALLAN BLOOM is the author of *The Closing of the American Mind* and of the forthcoming *Giants and Dwarfs* (to be published by Simon & Schuster in October), from which the present article has been adapted. Copyright © 1990 by Allan Bloom.

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and cultivate superior talents if they can be proved to benefit the most disadvantaged part of society. Whether this solution is reason or rationalization is open to discussion.

All this suggests the intricate psychology of the democrat, which we must be aware of in order to know ourselves and which we are not likely to be aware of without the help of significant thinkers like Tocqueville, Burke, and Plato, who see us from the outside and judge us in terms of serious alternatives to democracy. The charge of elitism reflects the moral temper of our regime, as the charge of atheism would have done in an earlier age. You couldn't get much of a response in a university today by saying that Allan Bloom doesn't believe in God. But you can get a lot of people worked up by saying that Allan Bloom doesn't believe in equality. And this tells us a lot about our times, and explains how tempting a career is offered to egalitarian Tartufferie. "Elitist" is not a very precise charge; yet compared with the Ivy League, I would have at worst to be called a moderate elitist, and by persons other than those who are now making the charge.

But the real disagreement concerns the content of today's and tomorrow's elite education. We are now witnessing in our universities the introduction of a new "non-elitist," "non-exclusionary" curriculum in the humanities and in parts of the social sciences, and with it a program for reforming the human understanding. This is an extremely radical project whose supporters pass it off as mainstream by marching under the colors of all the movements toward a more equal society which almost all Americans endorse. Not recognized for what it is, this radicalism can thus marshal powerful and sometimes angry passions alongside its own fanatic ones. The American Council of Learned Societies—upset by "the disturbing success" of my book, which it attributed to "American anti-intellectualism"—has even issued a report ordering us to believe that there is now a scholarly consensus, nay, a proof, that all classic texts are expressions of the unconscious class, gender, or race prejudices of their authors. The calling of the humanities in our day, it seems, is to liberate us from the sway of those authors and their prejudices—Shakespeare and Milton, among others, are mentioned in the report. This puts humanists at the cutting edge of the battle against "Eurocentrism." (Clearly, the characters who wrote this report were sent by central casting for the movie version of *The Closing of the American Mind.*)

The battle is not primarily, or even at all, scholarly but moral and political, and members of the reactionary rear-guard are the objects of special fury, the enemies of historic destiny. Consequently, *The Closing of the American Mind,* which takes an entirely different view of the classic texts and of the humanities in general—a view fundamentally at odds with the radical reform being imposed on us—has been brought before this Inquisition and condemned to banishment from the land of the learned.

People's angers reveal much about what concerns them. Anger almost always disguises itself as moral indignation and, as Aristotle teaches, is the only one of the passions that requires speech and reason—to provide arguments which justify it and without which it is frustrated and withers. Anger proves man's rationality while it obscures and endangers reason. The arguments it adduces always lead back to a general principle of morality and then issue in blame. Here is an example, as reported by Richard Bernstein in the New York *Times* (September 25, 1988):

> In some respects, the scene in North Carolina last weekend recalled the daily "minute of hatred" in George Orwell's *1984*, when citizens are required to rise and hurl invective at pictures of a man known only as Goldstein, the Great Enemy of the state.
>
> At a conference on the future of liberal education sponsored by Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, speaker after speaker denounced what they called "the cultural conservatives" who, in the words of a Duke English professor, Stanley Fish, have mounted "dyspeptic attacks on the humanities."
>
> There were no pictures of these "cultural conservatives" on the wall, but they were derided, scorned, laughed at. . . .

Such sentiments—and I appreciate the *Times*'s making explicit the resemblance to Stalinist thought control—represent the current establishment in the humanities, literature, and history. These professors are from hot institutions like Stanford and Duke which have most openly dedicated themselves to the new educational dawn called *openness,* a dawn whose rosy fingers are currently wrapped tightly around the throat of the curriculum in most universities.

In *The Closing of the American Mind* I offer a description of the young people of today as they have been affected by the times into which they were born and the failure of liberal education, dominated as it now is by doctrinaire forms of historicism and relativism, to liberate them from the clichés of the age. Contrary to what some have alleged, I feel sorrow or pity, not contempt, for these young people whose horizon has become so dark and narrow that, in this enlightened country, it has begun to resemble a cave. Self-consciousness, self-awareness, the Delphic "know thyself" seems to me to be the serious business of education. It is, I recognize, very difficult even to understand what that means, let alone to achieve it. But one thing is certain. If one's head is crammed with ideas that were once serious but have become clichés, if one does not even know that these clichés are not as natural

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as the sun and moon, and if one has no notion that there are alternatives to them, one is doomed to be the puppet of other people's ideas. Only the search back to the origins of one's ideas in order to see the real arguments for them, before people became so certain of them that they ceased thinking about them at all, can liberate us.

Our study of history has taught us to laugh at the follies of the whole past, the monarchies, oligarchies, theocracies, and aristocracies with their fanaticism for empire or salvation, once taken so seriously. But we have very few tools for seeing ourselves in the same way, as others will see us. Each age always conspires to make its own way of thinking appear to be the only possible or just way, and our age has the least resistance to the triumph of its own way. There is less real presence of respectable alternatives and less knowledge of the titanic intellectual figures who founded our way. Moreover, we are also affected by historicism, which tells us one cannot resist one's way, and relativism, which asks, "What's the use, anyway?" All this has the effect of crippling the natural longing to get out.

In *The Closing of the American Mind* I criticized doctrinaire historicism and relativism as threats to the self-awareness of those who honestly seek it. I pointed to the great sources of those serious ideas which have become dogmas and urged that we turn to the study of them in order to purge ourselves of our dogmatism. For this I have been violently attacked as nostalgic, ideological, and doctrinaire myself. The real meaning is: "Don't touch our belief structure; it hurts."

Yet we ought to recognize, on the basis of historical observation, that what epochs consider their greatest virtue is most often really their greatest temptation, vice, or danger—Roman manliness, Spanish piety, British class, German authenticity. We have to learn to put the scalpel to our virtues. Plato suggests that anyone born in a democracy is likely to be a relativist: it goes with the territory. Relativism may be true, but since we are by birthright inclined to it, we especially had better think it over. Not for the sake of good morals or good social order, at least in any usual sense of those terms, but for the sake of our freedom and our self-awareness.

Since I first addressed the issue of relativism, I have learned with what moral fervor it is protected. For example, the celebrated liberal, Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., says that (in contrast to my own alleged absolutism) the authentic American tradition is relativist. To support this latter contention he cites—*mirabile dictu*—the Declaration of Independence's "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . . ." Professor Schlesinger takes this statement of fundamental principle to be evidence of the American Founders' *relativism*. He made this astounding argument in a commencement address at Brown University, where he apparently thinks the students will believe anything.

It is a waste of time to defend myself when the charges allege that I said things I did not say, but it is perhaps useful to instruct Professor Schlesinger about the real question. I never stated, nor do I believe, that man is, or can be, in possession of absolutes. I tried to teach, evidently not very successfully in his case, that there are two threats to reason, the opinion that one knows the truth about the most important things and the opinion that there is no truth about them. Both of these opinions are fatal to philosophy; the first asserts that the quest for the truth is unnecessary, while the second asserts that it is impossible. The Socratic knowledge of ignorance, which I take to be the beginning point of all philosophy, defines the sensible middle ground between two extremes, the proofs of which demand much more than we know. Pascal's formula about our knowing too little to be dogmatists and too much to be skeptics perfectly describes our human condition as we really experience it, although men have powerful temptations to obscure it and often find it intolerable.

Socrates' way of life is the consequence of his recognition that we can know what it is that we do not know about the most important things and that we are by nature obliged to seek that knowledge. We must remain faithful to the bit of light which pierces through our circumambient darkness.

The fervor with which relativism is protected is matched by the zeal with which its contemporary opposite, "Eurocentrism," is attacked (though in this attack Professor Schlesinger, perhaps a little inconsistently, does not join). This fervor does not propose an investigation but a crusade. The very idea that we ought to look for rational standards by which to judge ourselves is scandalous. One simply has to believe in the current understanding of openness if one is to believe in democracy and be a decent person.

This openness dogma was epitomized by one intellectual who, unencumbered by acquaintance with my book, ridiculed me for not simply accepting that all cultures are equal. He said that this opinion must be standard equipment for all those who expect to cope with "the century of the Pacific" which is upon us.

His formulation set my imagination in motion. I decided it might be interesting to experience a Gulliver's travel to Japan to see whether we really want to set our bark on the great Pacific with a relativist compass and without a "Eurocentric" life jacket. We can weigh anchor at the new, new Stanford, whose slogan has in effect become "Join Stanford and see the world." When we arrive in Japan we shall see a thriving nation. Its success clearly has something to do with its society, which asks much of itself and gets it. It is a real community; its members have roots. Japanese society

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is often compared to a family. These characteristics are in tune with much of current liberal thought in America. (Remember Governor Mario Cuomo's keynote speech on this very theme to the Democratic convention in 1984.)

But the family in general is exclusive. There is an iron wall separating insiders from outsiders, and its members feel contrary sentiments toward the two. So it is in Japanese society, which is intransigently homogeneous, barring the diversity which is the great pride of the United States today. To put it brutally, the Japanese seem to be racists. They consider themselves superior; they firmly resist immigration; they exclude even the Koreans who have lived for generations among them. They have difficulty restraining cabinet officers from explaining that America's economic failings are due to blacks.

Should we open ourselves up to this new culture? Sympathize with its tastes? Should we aim for restrictiveness rather than diversity? Should we experiment with a more effective racism? All these things could be understood as part of our interest in keeping up with the Japanese economic miracle. Or they could, in a tonier vein, help us in our search for community and roots.

Of course, we recoil in horror at even having such thoughts. But how can we legitimate our horror? It is only the result of our acculturation, excess baggage brought with us on such voyages of discovery. If there are no transcultural values, our reaction is Eurocentric. And the one thing we know absolutely is that Eurocentrism is bad. So we have painted ourselves into a corner.

Condemning Eurocentrism is frequently a sign of intellectual, although not necessarily moral, progress. But it is only a first step. To recognize that some of the things our culture believes are not true imposes on us the duty of finding out which are true and which are not, a business altogether more difficult than the wholesale jettisoning of all that one thought one knew. Such jettisoning always ends up with the selective and thoughtless return to old Eurocentric ideas on the basis of what one needs right now, of what pleases one, of pure feeling.

This process has been nicely illustrated in recent times by the case of Salman Rushdie, author of the novel *The Satanic Verses*, which insulted the Muslim faith and occasioned the Ayatollah Khomeini's command to have Rushdie killed. There was general shock throughout the Western world at this, and writers, whose ox was being gored, rushed before the TV cameras to denounce so blatant an attack on the inviolable principle of freedom of speech. All well and good. But the kicker was that most of these very same writers had for many years been teaching that we must respect the integrity of other cultures and that it was arrogant Eurocentrism to judge other cultures according to our standards, themselves merely products of our culture. In this case, however, all such reasonings were forgotten, and the Eurocentric principle of freedom of speech was treated as though its claims to transcultural status, its claims to be valid everywhere and always, were true. A few days earlier such claims had been treated as instruments of American imperialism; miraculously they were transformed into absolutes. By now, however, one can already see a softening on the question of Rushdie's innocence among the more modish radical intellectuals.

Leaving aside the intellectual incoherence here, this floating means to say that we do not know from moment to moment what we will do when there are conflicts, which there inevitably will be, between human rights and the imperatives of the culturally sacred. The serious arguments that established the right of freedom of speech were made by philosophers—most notably Locke, Milton, and John Stuart Mill—but our contemporaries do not return to them to refresh their memories and to see whether the arguments are really good. And this is due not only to laziness but also to the current attack on the very idea of such study.

From the slogans and the arguments echoed so frequently in the universities and the press one can judge the intentions of the "non-elitist" and "non-exclusionary" curriculum now sweeping the country, and what is at stake. The key word is *canon*. What we are witnessing is the Quarrel of the Canons, the 20th century's farcical version of the 17th century's Quarrel Between the Ancients and the Moderns—the greatest document of which is Swift's *Battle of the Books*. Would that he were here to describe ours as he described theirs!

The issue is what food best nourishes the hungers of young souls. The canon is the newly valued, demagogically intended, expression for the books taught and read by students at the core of their formal education. But as soon as one adopts the term, as both sides have done, the nature of the debate has thereby been determined. For canon means what is established by authority, by the powers, hence not by criteria that are rationally defensible. The debate shifts from the content of books to how they become powerful, the motives for which they are used. And since canons are, by definition, instruments of domination, they are there to be overthrown, *deconstructed*, in the name of liberation by those who seek *empowerment*.

Philosophy in the past was about knowing; now it is about power. "Philosophy is the most spiritualized will to power." That is from Nietzsche, as is, more or less, all the current talk about the canon. "It's all about power," as they say, and in a more metaphysical sense than most know. This is the source of the deep drama being played out so frivolously about us. Professor Edward Said of the Columbia English department said at Stanford that the new university reforms were the triumph of post-modernism, meaning, among other things, that the curriculum which

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taught that the theoretical life is highest has been overcome. Curiously, books are invested with a very great significance in all this. They are the causes, not mere epiphenomena, as Marxism would have it. Change the books, not the ownership of the means of production, and you change the world. "Readers of the world, you have nothing to lose but your canon."

Underlying the tumult over non-Western content, then, is a discussion among Westerners using entirely Western categories about the decline or end of the West. The suicide of the West is, by definition, accomplished by Western hands. The *Times* report of the North Carolina conference gives the flavor of the public discussion:

> . . . the conference's participants denounced what they said was a narrow, outdated interpretation of the humanities and of culture itself, one based, they frequently pointed out, on works written by "dead white European males."

That is *the* slogan. Above all the campaign is against Eurocentrism:

> The message of the North Carolina conference was that American society has changed too much for this view to prevail any longer. Blacks, women, Latinos, and homosexuals are demanding recognition for their own canons. "Projects like those of [William] Bennett, [E.D.] Hirsch, and [Allan] Bloom all look back to the recovery of the earlier vision of American culture, as opposed to the conception of a kind of ethnic carnival or festival of cultures or ways of life or customs," Professor Fish said.

Replace the old, cold Greek temple with an Oriental bazaar. Overthrow the Waspocracy by means of a Rainbow Coalition. This has more or less plausibility as a political "strategy." Whether it should be the polar star in the formation of young minds is another question. It promises continuing wondrous curricular variations as different specialties and groups vie for power.*

This is the popular surface of the movement, the publicly acceptable principle of everyone's getting a piece of the action in a nation that has bought into group politics. But there is a deeper, stronger, and more revealing side:

> The conference buzzed with code words. When the speakers talked about "the hegemonic culture," they meant undemocratic domination by white men. The scholars particularly scorned the idea that certain great works of literature have absolute value or represent some eternal truth. Just about everything, they argued, is an expression of race, class, or gender.

This is academic jargon, one-third Marxist, two-thirds Nietzschean; but it points toward the metaphysics of the cosmic power struggle in terms of which we interpret everything nowadays. All books have to be reinterpreted to find the conscious or unconscious power motive of their authors. As Nietzsche puts it, "Every philosophy is the author's secret confession."

The other side in this struggle can be found in the words of the black writer and activist W.E.B. Du Bois at the turn of the century:

> I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I walk arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out of the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn or condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the veil.

I confess that this view is most congenial to me. Du Bois found our common transcultural humanity not in a canon, but in certain works from which he learned about himself and gained strength for his lonely journey, beyond the veil. He found community rather than war. He used the books to think about his situation, moving beyond the corrosive of prejudice to the independent and sublime dignity of the fully developed soul. He recapitulates the ever-renewed experience of books by intelligent poor and oppressed people seeking for a way out.

But during the recent Stanford curriculum debate, a leader of the black student group declared that the implicit message of the Western civilization curriculum is "nigger go home." From this perspective Du Bois was suffering from false consciousness, a deceptive faith in theoretical liberation offered by the inventors of practical slavery.

Now, obviously books are being used by nations and religions to support their way and to train the young to it. But that is not the whole story. Many books, perhaps the most important ones, have an independent status and bring us light from outside our cave, without which we would be blind. They are frequently the acid which reveals the outlines of abusive power. This is especially true in a liberal society like our own, where it is hard to find a "canonical" book which truly supports our way unqualifiedly. Fur-

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* During the question period following the lecture from which this article has been adapted, I discovered that this project has been a roaring success with at least some students. A Chinese, a black, an Armenian, and a person speaking for homosexuals wondered whether they were being "excluded," inasmuch as books by members of their "communities" are not represented in curricula in proportion to their numbers in the population. They seemed to think that Greeks and Italians have been in control of the universities and that now their day is coming. One can imagine a census which would redistribute the representation of books. The premise of these students' concerns is that "where you come from," your culture, is more important than where you are going. They are rather like Plato's noble guardian dogs in the *Republic* who love what is familiar, no matter how bad it is, and hate all that is strange or foreign. This kind of demand is entirely new. You do not go to college to discover for yourself what is good but to be confirmed in your origins.

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ther, it is at least plausible that the books which have a continuing good reputation and used to be read in colleges have made it on their intrinsic merits. To be sure, traditions tend to ossify and also to aggregate superfluous matters, to be taught authoritatively by tiresome persons who do not know why they are important and who hold their jobs because they are virtuosos of trivia. But this only means that the traditions have to be renewed from time to time and the professors made to give an account of themselves.

One of the most obvious cases of a writer used as an authority to bolster what might be called a structure of power is Aristotle during the Christian Middle Ages. Scholasticism was a stifling force which had to be rebelled against in order to free the mind. But to take that Will Durant-like interpretation as exhaustive would be naive. In the first place, Aristotle is something on his own. He survived the wreckage of scholasticism quite nicely and needed no power structure prior to that time or afterward to insure the continuing interest in his works.

Secondly, Aristotle's accession to power was a result of a revolution in Christianity brought about by the explosion of Greek philosophy into Christian Europe. That philosophy had been preserved and renewed among the Muslims, and the challenge of reason to revelation presented by the Muslim philosophers precipitated a crisis in Christianity that was appeased but not entirely resolved by Thomas Aquinas. Here we have a truly interesting case of the relation between the allegedly Western and the allegedly non-Western.

But this is by no means the only case which shows what a grave error it is to accept that the books of the dead white Western male canon are essentially Western—or any of those other things. The fact that I am doubtful about the non-Western craze suggests automatically, even to sympathetic critics, that I am promoting Western Civ or the like. Yet the very language used reveals how enslaved we have become to the historicist assertion that all thought is decisively culture-bound. When Averroes and Thomas Aquinas read Aristotle they did not think of him as Greek and put him into his historical context. They had no interest in Greek Civ but treated him as a wise man, hence a contemporary at all times.

We smile at this naiveté, but they understood Aristotle better than do our scholars, as one can see simply by perusing their commentaries. Plato and Kant claim that they speak to all men everywhere and forever, and I see no reason to reject those claims *a priori*. But that is precisely what is done when they are taken to be parts of Western Civ. To the extent they are merely that, the appeals against them are justified, for Western Civ is clearly partial, demanding the supplement of all the other Civs. The strength of these appeals is thus in their demand for wholeness or completeness of understanding.

HENCE, the real, underlying quarrel is *not* about Western and non-Western but about the possibility of philosophy. Nobody, or practically nobody, argues that natural science is essentially Western. Some efforts have been made in that direction, just as some feminists have tried to show that science is essentially male, but these efforts, aside from their admirable sense of the need for theoretical consistency, have not proved persuasive. There is that big rock of transcultural knowledge or truth, natural science, standing in our midst while we chatter on about the cultural basis of all knowledge. A serious non-Western *Putsch* would require that students learn 50 percent non-Western math, 50 percent non-Western physics, 50 percent non-Western biology, and so forth for medicine and engineering. The reformers stop there because they know they would smack up against a brick wall and discredit their whole movement. But philosophy, they say, is not like that. Perhaps, but I have yet to see a serious discussion about wherein it differs. Differ it does today. But qualitatively? That question ought to keep us busy for a long time. Science is surely somehow transcultural. Religion seems pretty much limited to cultures, even to define them. Is philosophy like science, or is it like religion? What we are witnessing is an attempt to drag it away definitively to the camp of religion.

The universities have dealt with this problem by ceding the despised historicized humanities to the political activists and extremists, leaving undisturbed their non-historicized scientific disciplines, which is where the meat and the money are. It is a windfall for administrators to be able to turn all the affirmative-action complaints over to the humanities, which act as a lightning rod while their ship continues its stately progress over undisturbed waters. Stanford shows its "concerned," "humane," radical face to its inner community, and its serious technical face to the outside community, particularly to its donors. The humanities radicals will settle for this on the calculation that if they can control the minds of the young, they will ultimately gain political control over the power of science.

The serious scholars in non-Western thought should bring us the powerful *texts* they know of to help us. For the true canon aggregates around the most urgent questions we face. That is the only ground for the study of books. Nietzsche did not seek out Socrates because he was part of the classical canon German boys learned in school. He did so in spite of that fact. Socrates was necessary to him as the profoundest statement of what philosophy is and as the worthiest of rivals. Machiavelli was impelled by real need, not by conformism, when he sought out Xenophon. Male, female, black, white, Greek, barbarian—that was all a matter of indifference, as it should be. Nietzsche reflected on Buddha when he wanted to test the principle of contradiction. That is a model of the way things should be. The last thing

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we need is a sort of philosophic UN run by bureaucrats for the sake of representation for all peoples.

Each must ultimately judge for himself about the important books, but a good beginning would be to see what other thinkers the thinkers who attract him turn to. That will quickly lead to the top. There are very few who remain there, and they recognize each other. There is no conspiracy; only the desire to know. If we allow ourselves to be seduced by the plausible theses of our day, and turn our backs on the great dialogue, our loss will be irreparable.

In my book I connected this radical historicism with fascism and asserted that the thinking of the European Right had wandered over to the Left in America. This earned me severe and unthinking criticism (with the honorable exception of Richard Rorty). It seems to such critics that I am one of those persons who trivialize unique and terrible phenomena by calling anyone whom I dislike a fascist or a Nazi. But I did not call persons active in the 60's those names. I said that the language of the New Left was no longer truly Marxist and had become imbued with the language of fascism. And anyone with an ear for the speech of intellectuals in Weimar Germany will hear echoes all around us of the dangerous ideas to which they became accustomed.

Since the publication of *The Closing of the American Mind*, fortuitously there has been fresh attention paid to the Nazism of Martin Heidegger, more and more widely recognized as the most intelligent figure contributing to the post-modernist movement. At the same time the late Paul de Man, who as a professor at Yale introduced deconstructionism into the U.S., was revealed to have written, as a young man in his native Belgium, pro-Nazi articles for a collaborationist newspaper. In reading these articles I was struck by the fact that if one suppresses the references to Hitler and Hitlerism, much of it sounds like what one reads in advanced literary reviews today.

The lively debate around these issues has not been very helpful, for it focuses more on questions of personal guilt than on the possible relation of Heidegger's or de Man's thought to the foulest political extremism. The fact that de Man had become a leftist after settling in America proves not a thing. He never seems to have passed through a stage where he was attracted by reason or liberal democracy. Those who chose culture over civilization, the real opposition, which we have forgotten, were forced to a position beyond good and evil, for to them good and evil were products of cultures.

This, then, is how the contemporary American intellectual scene looks. Much greater events occurring outside the United States, however, demonstrate the urgency of our task. Those events are epitomized by the Statue of Liberty erected by the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square. Apparently, after some discussion about whether it should be altered to have Chinese rather than *Eurocentric* features, there was a consensus that it did not make any difference.

The terror in China continues, and we cannot yet know what will become of those courageous young persons. But we do know the justice of their cause; and although there is no assurance that it will ultimately triumph, their oppressors have won the universal execration of mankind. With Marxist ideology a wretched shambles everywhere, nobody believes any longer in Communist legitimacy. Everywhere in the Communist world what is wanted is rational liberal democracy that recognizes men's natural freedom and equality and the rights dependent on them. The people of that world need and want education in democracy and the institutions that actualize it. Such education is one of the greatest services the democracies can offer to the people who still live or recently have lived under Communist tyrannies and long for liberty. The example of the United States is what has impressed them most, and their rulers have been unable to stem the infection.

Our example, though, requires explanations, the kind the Founders gave to the world. And this is where we are failing: the dominant schools in American universities can tell the Chinese students only that they should avoid Eurocentrism, that rationalism has failed, that they should study non-Western cultures, and that bourgeois liberalism is the most despicable of regimes. Stanford has replaced John Locke, *the* philosopher of liberalism, with Frantz Fanon, an ephemeral writer once promoted by Jean-Paul Sartre because of his murderous hatred of Europeans and his espousal of terrorism. However, this is not what the Chinese need. They have Deng Xiaoping to deconstruct their Statue of Liberty. We owe them something much better.

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America's "Model Minority"

Louis Winnick

THE flood in recent decades of Asian immigrants to the U.S. was planned by no one, and would likely have been forestalled had a lingeringly racist Congress foreseen it. Indeed, the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was a collective failure of colossal magnitude in demographic forecasting. The miscalculations were threefold: the actual volume of immigration far exceeded the projected—and desired—level; most of the immigrants came not from Europe as expected, but from the Third World; and of the Third World entrants a high and rising proportion turned out to be Asians who, at the time of the bill's enactment, were decidedly the least-wanted immigrants.

Thus, from an aggregate of 153,000 in 1951-60, the volume of immigrants from Asia bounded to 428,000 in 1971-80 and is certain to exceed 2.5 million in 1981-90. (By 1988, the last data available, 2.1 million had already been admitted.) Asia, which had accounted for only 6 percent of all admittees in the 50's, hit 14 percent in the 60's, 30 percent in the 70's, and 46 percent in the late 80's.

One of the main forces driving those startling numbers was the special provision for refugees after Saigon's downfall in 1975. For at that point, with Indochina in shambles, all considerations of limits evaporated. Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians by the scores of thousands crowded into makeshift boats, braving stormy seas and murderous pirates and every manner of deprivation for the sanctuaries of Thailand and Malaysia or any other piece of land willing to offer an abode, however temporary. Between 1975 and 1986, more than 900,000 Indochinese arrived in America, nearly six times the annual ceiling imposed by the 1965 statute on the entire Eastern Hemisphere and, of course, not subject to that limitation. By now, the aggregate of extra-quota Asian admissions is approaching the million mark.

The volatile ebbs and flows of refugees aside, the largest sending nation was (as it had previously been) the Philippines, accounting for a bit more than 50,000 per year. Next came Korea with nearly 36,000, then Vietnam, India, and mainland China, each with a margin of over 25,000 per year. Were Hong Kong and Taiwan added to the mainland total, Chinese would rival and probably exceed Filipinos.

This errant immigration policy, however, turned out to be a golden blunder, serendipity writ large. By inadvertence and over uncharted pathways, it brought to the United States millions of new workers, all with an unappeasable hunger for jobs and multitudes with eminently marketable skills, advanced education, and unbounded career ambitions. In short, they carried with them the precise qualities that a myriad of the Great Society's compensatory and manpower-training programs of the 1960's tried to instill with, to put it gently, indifferent success.

Consider also urban renewal, another Great Society goal. Here again, one of the more beneficial of the new immigration's social reshapings has been the restoration of life to the decaying and depopulating neighborhoods, the emptied-out churches, schools, and retail streets in so many of America's ebbing industrial cities. As with the labor supply, demographic renewal achieved much of what the official urban-renewal programs expressly tried and so often failed to do.

It seems that the Law of Unintended Consequences, so malign in most of its workings, occasionally displays a benign face.

THE contrast with the past could not be more striking or more dramatic. In the post-Civil War decades, anti-Orientalism flamed in the Western states, especially in California and Colorado where large numbers of Chinese had been drawn in to work in the mines, lay down the rail tracks, and perform assorted domestic services, including as the now-lamented laundrymen of the cities and the chuckwagon cooks of the Western range. To the miners and laboring classes of the West, the Chinese were unabsorbable, barbaric heathens. ("A town populated by 1,200 souls and two Chinamen," is a locution that lingers in the memory from a youthful addiction to Western pulps.) In the popular belief, Orientals were opium fiends, with talons for fingernails, ominously drooping moustaches

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in front, and weird pigtails in back, and possessed of a revolting appetite for rat meat. Worse yet, Chinese were willing to labor long hours (Sundays and holidays included) for lower wages than any proper Christian could survive on, much less be content with.

The Yellow Peril frenzy in the Western states during the latter half of the 19th century left in its wake a bloody trail of lynchings, arson, and forcible expulsions. Atrocities were recorded in more than twoscore towns and mining camps across California and Washington, and a dozen more in Wyoming, Colorado, and Nevada. The perpetrators were often union members, with the Knights of Labor in the van. The frenzy spilled over from workplace to neighborhood. On October 24, 1871, in Los Angeles, where the 1870 census had enumerated a mere 172 Chinese, an agitated mob attacked the local Chinatown and slaughtered 19 Chinese by shooting and hanging. No violence of such ferocity was experienced by any other American ethnic or religious immigrant group, not by the Catholics at the height of Know-Nothingism, not by American Jews at any time. Only blacks and, in a different way, American Indians, neither of them immigrants, have suffered comparable outrages.

The denouement of all this anger was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the handiwork of a coalition of Western and Southern legislators. It is purported to be the only anti-immigration law ever enacted in the U.S. that bears, without the pretense of a fig leaf, a named nationality in its title. The Chinese Exclusion Act was followed, in 1907-08, by the Gentlemen's Agreement, which was, of course, the exact inverse of gentlemanly. It sharply restricted the entry of Japanese, who also had been immigrating to California and the West in rising numbers, attracted to truck farming and gardening rather than to mining and industry.* Then in 1917, the U.S. enacted a general ban against most of Asia—the Asiatic Barred Zone. The gates were closed even more implacably in 1924 by the Oriental Exclusion Act that exempted only the Philippines, with which the U.S. had a special relation (and even it was virtually walled off during the Great Depression).

In short, over the forty years between 1882 and 1924, Congress unequivocally declared that, henceforth, America was not to be a haven for the yellow race. Wherever else the torch on the Statue of Liberty might beckon, it would not be to the Orient. In part the U.S. justified this avowedly racist immigration policy by means of a 1922 Supreme Court decision declaring that the Constitution afforded naturalization rights solely to whites and to free persons of African origin. The syllogism went: since Asians were unmentioned in the Constitution, they were not entitled to citizenship, and if not entitled to citizenship, they were not entitled to admission.

Among the earliest to point out that character and culture can overcome the most oppressive racial and religious discrimination was William Petersen, a social demographer at the University of California, Berkeley. His argument and findings were later extended and deepened, most powerfully by Thomas Sowell of the Hoover Institution. Drawing a parallel that has since become ubiquitous, Petersen took American Asians and American Jews as examples of two formerly marginalized populations, otherwise profoundly different in race, religion, and historical origins:

> The gross discrimination, the collective frustrations, to which Chinese and Japanese have been subjected ordinarily result in a pattern of poor education, low income, high crime rate, and unstable family life, with each of these reinforcing all the other components of a self-sustaining slum. Efforts to assist members of such "problem minorities" in achieving parity with the general population have seldom been altogether successful. However, these two minorities themselves broke through the barriers of prejudice and, by such key indices as education and income, surpassed the average levels of native-born whites. This anomalous record, like the earlier one of the Jews, challenges the premises from which the etiologies of poverty, crime, illegitimacy, and other social ills are typically deduced. That discrimination is evil in itself is beyond question by the norms of American democracy; the question is whether even the most debilitating discrimination need incapacitate a people if it is not reinforced by other pressures. In the large field of ethnic and race relations, hardly any theory or social policy would remain unchanged if one applied the new insights that the extraordinary success of Japanese and Chinese immigrants suggests.

Petersen was the first to apply to Asian-Americans the honorific, "model minority." That was yesteryear's coinage. By now, Asian-Americans have vaulted to a more exalted station—America's trophy population. Or, in the deft formulation of the sociologist Peter Rose, the pariahs have become paragons. Rapturous tributes hailing these restorers of the immigrants' dream are a staple of the national and local media, a new breed, dare I say, of "yellow journalism."

So extreme is this adulation that Asian-American spokesmen have rushed forward, and rightly so, to cool off or dismiss the hyperbolic excesses. They call solemn attention to the many things not going at all well for America's newest paragons. Beneath a thick crust of scientists, professionals, and entrepreneurs are thicker layers of struggling families—peddlers and waiters and office cleaners and sweater stitchers who eke out a

* It was from this migration that the Japanese were forced into the post-Pearl Harbor concentration camps, an episode that continues to resonate.

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bare living by dint of double jobs and the presence of multiple wage earners. There is a growing number of Southeast Asian refugees who have been on welfare since their arrival and who may permanently remain there. There are ungifted Asian youth ("I've got a couple of dummies," complains a high-school teacher, "who don't know what a decimal is").

Then there looms the dark underside of immigration—the small-time Asian extortion gangs and big-time Asian drug rings, among the most brutal and vicious in the rackets. They demonstrate, as did other overreaching immigrant groups before them, that ladders to wealth and status often stand on crooked legs.

It would be foolish and irresponsible to slight the profusion of Asian unsuccesses amid the profusion of successes. All mass migrations are accompanied by hardship and privation, generally worse for the most recent arrivals. For many these are lifetime defeats, and they die as unfulfilled as when they came. All that granted, one should remember that across the centuries, America's unwritten and unsigned "compact" with its immigrants has been addressed not to the first generation, but to the second and third.

Yet among the Asians, even where the first generation is concerned, the stereotype holds. Again the apt comparison is with the Jews. Multitudes of Jewish doctors and lawyers can be matched with multitudes of Jewish workers whose capacities or even aspirations never rose above the taxi wheel, the lunch counter, or the press iron. Albert Einstein and Vladimir Horowitz were contemporaries of Abe Reles and Meyer Lansky. But neither fact remotely refutes the conclusion that the Jewish immigrant experience in America has been a chronicle of extraordinary progress. So too with the Asians.

The 1980 census portrayed in a welter of numbers just how far the former Asian pariahs had come. According to most socioeconomic indicators—income, labor-force participation, education, occupational status, family stability and structure—Asian-Americans were now the equals of, or had surpassed, mainstream America.

Thus, the 1980 tabulations disclosed that median family income of Asian-Americans exceeded that of their host country, $23,000 compared to $19,000. For Japanese-Americans, a majority of whom were native-born and assimilated, the median was half again above the norm, $27,000. Asian Indians, who had entered with every manner of credential including English proficiency, reported an average of $25,000, second only to the long-resident Japanese. For Chinese-Americans and Koreans, the bulk foreign-born, and most of them recent newcomers, the respective figures were $22,600 and $20,500. Only Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians, most of them refugees in desperate flight, stood below the national average; by 1986, a new survey would show that even they had overtaken it.

Much the same story was told about occupational status. In 1980, 24 out of every 100 U.S. whites were in the census's highest job classification—professionals, managers, and executives. In that class, by contrast, were 47 percent of the new Asian Indians, 30 percent of the Chinese, 28 percent of the Japanese, and 22 percent of the Koreans. And even though it is the common plight of émigrés, lacking language and licenses, to descend the job ladder (many a Korean greengrocer was a trained engineer at home and many a Chinese doctor first does duty as a laboratory assistant), those percentages reflect occupations held after arrival, not at the time of departure.

The achievements of both Jews and Asians are largely the consequence of a common ensemble of cultural values, sufficiently well known to be ingrained in the common parlance. They include an unswerving devotion to family, extended as well as nuclear; the high premiums paid and sacrifices endured for educational advance; the disproportionately low rates of crime and welfare dependency; a well-developed propensity, through thrift and self-denial, toward capital accumulation—that is, the willingness to defer present gratification for future goals; a strong bent toward self-employment that seems to wane among the assimilated generations.

Extending the list are further commonalities. More so than other immigrant groups, both minorities have sought early Americanization, to acquire as rapidly as possible some proficiency in English and legal citizenship. For example, of all immigrants admitted during the decade of the 70's, 55 percent of the Koreans, 60 percent of the Chinese, and 71 percent of the Indians were naturalized by 1988. (By contrast, for Mexicans, Dominicans, and Cubans, the respective proportions were 12, 21, and 26 percent.) In addition, Asians are quicker to naturalize, with a median post-admission interval of only seven years (compared to twelve years for Mexicans and nine years for South Americans). Traditionally, Asian and Jewish immigrants have also resorted to after-school, private facilities, not the mandated public-school curriculum, to preserve for their children indigenous language and culture. (For the Jews, of course, there was no other option.)

So much for the conventional list of features shared by Asians and Jews. But there are also several important commonalities that seldom appear on this list. The first is that both East European Jews and Asians have flourished far better after emigrating than they did in their smothering countries of origin. The submerged capacities of a striving people rise soonest, and perhaps only, where there is a sufficient dose of economic and political freedom, where governance by caste and command are least, where

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rewards are distributed by merit and performance instead of ascription and birth. Thus, the Chinese diaspora fared demonstrably better in (pre-1975) South Vietnam and Indonesia than on the Communist Chinese mainland, still better in the benign autocracies of Taiwan and Singapore, exuberantly in economically unbridled Hong Kong, and best of all within the free and stable polities of the United States and Canada.

A second generally overlooked commonality is that the Western diasporas of both Asians and Jews have opened pathways to self-fullfillment for their women, to heights improbable in their lands of origin. Asia's cultural traditions are bound up with sons, not daughters, for whom marriage and children are often deemed the *summum bonum* and overeducation a handicap. "My father (an immigrant Chinese laundryman) did not want me to go to college," writes Dr. Betty Lee Sung, a leading Chinese-American ethnographer. "He said if you go, I will disinherit you. I said, goodbye papa." America's unparalleled infrastructure of community colleges, senior colleges, and universities has proffered a cornucopia of higher educational opportunities to aspiring Asian women, almost as an entitlement. Through the portals where passed the daughters of Russian and Polish Jews, to emerge as teachers and social workers and, in the next generation, as doctors, lawyers, and university professors, are passing today in even greater numbers the daughters of the new Asians.

A third transcending experience shared by new Asian and older Jewish migrations to America is a speedy ascent—speedy by history's time scale—from pariah to paragon status. Both have risen in the general esteem from among the most rejected to among the most respected (though not necessarily beloved) people in the Western world. To be sure, each day's news reports disclose that hard-core anti-Semites still abound, as do hard-core Asiaphobes. They exist even in places where there are neither Asians nor Jews. But neither phobia is as consequential as before.

The proof of that proposition is not only in the "soft" evidence of enhanced ethnic tolerance registered in public-opinion polls. It is also, and more convincingly, to be found in the harder evidence of mainstream behavior. The American people have afforded both minorities virtually unimpeded access to most neighborhoods, to most corporate boardrooms, and to the ranks of the establishment. To the despair of their elders, both minorities have stepped up the pace of assimilation through intermarriage. The out-marriage rates of second- and third-generation Jews and Asians are exceptionally high and rising.

In addition to a great willingness to work, another advantage of the Asian Americans was a good education, beyond that of the U.S. nation as a whole, or other immigrant groups, past or present. Unlike the Jews from the *shtetl* who came with only a smattering of secular education and their womenfolk with less, Asians brought their diplomas with them. In 1980 (when the majority of Asians had been here less than 10 years), 75 percent reported themselves as high-school graduates, compared to 66 percent for all America. Still more impressive were their credentials in higher education, a rarely satisfied ache for the first generation of Jewish arrivals (and even for a majority of their children). Proportionately, Asian-Americans, native-born and new, possessed twice as many college or advanced degrees as did other Americans, 34 percent compared to 16.

Once here, Asians have performed admirably on all the conventional standardized intelligence and scholastic tests, both undergraduate and graduate, and especially on the numeracy components. In 1989, the average SAT score in mathematics was 525 for Asians compared to 491 for whites and 386 for blacks. Asians, however, did less well than whites on the verbal part, though the differential is almost surely transitory, reflecting the uncertain language footing of the foreign-born. (How quickly this handicap can be overcome is illustrated by a twelve-year-old Cambodian refugee girl who placed second in a regional spelling bee; the word she misspelled was "enchilada.")

One may be confident of a spreading out from the professions of quantity and space to those of the word. For Asians are now the fastest growing minority in America's top law schools, and they are likewise making a strong entry into American letters. The roster of acclaimed books in English by assimilated Asian authors continuously lengthens. Among the more prominent are Maxine Hong Kingston, Ved Mehta, Bharati Mukherjee, Amy Tan, and Wendy Wang. These are all serious writers. We will have to wait longer for the comic, some Asian-American S.J. Perelman, or Woody Allen, some Leo Rosten to recount Mr. Parkhill's travails with the Education of Yuan-Ho Chen and to charm us with the Joys of Mandaringlish.

The meritocratic qualifications of Asian-Americans have thrown into a dither the custodians of affirmative-action programs in higher education. As a federally protected minority, Asian-Americans are, in principle, eligible for special preferences to compensate for underrepresentation. But how should a university respond to an "overrepresented" minority? What compounds academia's dilemma is that the test of over- or underrepresentation is linked to a given minority's proportion of the population, not its proportion of the qualified pool.*

Academia's answer, a blend of defiance, duplicity, and sheepishness, is an array of statistical

* Judging from a string of recent decisions *re* employment and minority "set-aside" regulations, the Supreme Court seems to be veering to a "qualified pool" test. It will be interesting to observe, long after *Bakke*, whether the Court will revisit higher-education discrimination cases and apply its emerging standard.

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"controls" (as Henry Rosovsky of Harvard still calls them, carefully eschewing the term "quotas"). Such retreats from merit standards obviously evoke the Jewish quotas at elite schools in the past. Those three-name university presidents of yore shrank from the thought of uncompromised merit admissions; it would inundate their institutions with the coarse, sweaty progeny of Hebrew immigrants, uncouth in diction and pushy in manner. Surely, runs the refrain of today's deans, were grades our only criteria, we would take more Asians. But we must find room for the well-rounded as well as the studious, for athletes, hobbyists, and community-service stalwarts. Nor can we honorably ignore the children of alumni and donors. Asians rarely fit into such non-scholastic categories, categories irrelevant to educational excellence, presumably the *raison d'être* of a world-class university.

Yet so overpowering are Asian-Americans' educational qualifications, and so mounting their volume of protest, that "controls," ceilings, and quotas act more to retard than to contain their surge into higher education. At Berkeley (which now has an Asian-American provost), the proportion of Asian-heritage admissions has crossed the 33-percent mark. Since the best universities have more or less fixed capacity, rising Asian enrollments must be at the expense of someone else. Interestingly enough, the losers at Berkeley have not been blacks and Hispanics but whites, whose proportion has steadily diminished.*

Not surprisingly, given the academic proclivities of Asian-Americans among the professions, there is a heavy concentration in the scientific and technological disciplines. Physics, chemistry, mathematics, statistics, computer technology, and engineering are the predominant areas of preference. When Asian-Americans stray from the strictly technological specialties, they end up in such disciplines as economics and business administration, both of which are freighted with heavy overlays of mathematics and statistics; and both of which offer impressive rewards to designers and operators of sophisticated computerized models.†

An interesting departure from the number-space concentration is classical music. At the Juilliard School of Music, Asians approximate a third of the enrollment. Increasing numbers of gifted young Asians are also earning reputations in the best concert halls, particularly at the piano and violin, instruments not so long ago virtually a Jewish monopoly. (Classical music, it has been observed, is the popular avocation of scientists and engineers, as Einstein and the amateur quartets at White Sands attest.)

If the universities and the professions are one route to Asian-American economic success, a second is small business. The self-employment rate of Asian immigrants is an astonishing 33 percent, compared to a 10-percent rate for the general population. In the New York metropolitan area, 41 percent of Korean families operated their own businesses, more than 10,000 in all. In Los Angeles, Koreans, who in 1982 accounted for less than 1 percent of the population, owned 5 percent of all retail stores.

What accounts for the Asian proclivity for a business of one's own? Social scientists are split between competing theories. One cluster holds that trade is an instinct in the Orient and that self-enterprise manifests a Confucian tenet that it is better to be the head of a chicken than the tail of an ox. A more persuasive view denies "innateness" and cultural heritage and posits an "opportunity" theory. In this latter view, the post-1965 waves of Asian immigrants found an abundance of small-business opportunities in a fast-declining urban America. That was particularly so in the desolate streets of deteriorating neighborhoods, with any number of retail hollows and voids to fill.

The first Korean retail merchants on the blocks of Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Newark, Watts, and similarly depleted black neighborhoods were attracted by the low rents of abandoned stores. Their first wares were not fruit and vegetables, but natural, inexpensive ladies' wigs, then an item of fashion. From a still pre-industrialized Korea came a steady flow of wigs manufactured from long and pliant Asian hair (supplementary income for poor Korean females) that were particularly favored by black women. The first wave of Korean immigrants peddled the wigs from street stands or door-to-door before accumulating sufficient means to rent a store. The wig industry did not long thrive, however, displaced by cheaper artificial hairpieces.

The Koreans then turned to greengroceries, observing in these unpromising streets promising openings to serve, without excessive up-front investment, an underserved economic market. The

* Not all of the white drop is due to reverse discrimination. The relative size of California's "Anglo" population, as whites are commonly denoted, is steadily shrinking. That is so even after allowing for the honorary Anglo status conferred upon the likes of Armenians, Iranians, Soviet- and American-born Jews, and other ethnicities far removed from British origins. So heavy is the flow into California of non-Anglos—Asians and Hispanics—and so high their fertility, that Anglos are projected to become a minority fifty years from now.

† No one has satisfactorily explained the Asian aptitude for science, mathematics, engineering, and cognate subjects. There is nothing inherent in Asian culture or history or in the precepts of the principal Asian religions that would have led one to deduce so striking a specialization. On the contrary, the moralistic, contemplative, and mystical elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and other Asian religions might have bent them, one could speculate, rather to philosophy and the humanities. But neither, I suppose, could one have predicted that from those *shusters* and *shneiders* huddled long days around the sacred writs, wrestling with textual subtleties and unworldly constructs, would spring so many of the superstars of science and mathemetics. The capacities of goal-driven people, when released in permissive societies, have no preconceived limits.

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small fruit and vegetable shop was the ideal venture for an industrious immigrant with little language or trade credit, a cash business for merchandise replaceable each day in small lots by a predawn trip to the wholesale market. Not much was required in the way of books, since there were usually no employees other than family and compatriots; government reports (and taxes) were minimal. With all hands—wife, children, and the newly landed from Seoul—working from dawn until far into the late night, it was possible to earn a modest profit and even to put something away for a larger venture.

In those slum areas, the Korean merchants also earned something much less pleasing—the hostility of many neighborhood blacks. The recent front-page conflict between blacks and Koreans on Brooklyn's Church Avenue is merely the latest of a long series of boycotts experienced in Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. Blacks angrily protest the Koreans' failure to employ local help or to take up neighborhood residence. The Koreans are accused further of draining money from the neighborhood without putting anything back, and of treating every black customer as a prospective shoplifter or robber. The Koreans, nothing daunted, reply that they have little need for outside help and that theft and break-ins are so commonplace that defensive behavior is essential. Some believe that black rage is prompted less by Korean offenses than by overt resentment that a pack of immigrants have so quickly and so successfully exploited opportunities that with greater effort and foresight might have gone to blacks. All it takes are the eighteen-hour day and the seven-day week.

Along with retailing, Asian entrepreneurs have captured the garment industry; it is no longer the Jewish but the Asian manufacturer who reigns over the sewing machine. New York's faltering and California's burgeoning garment factories represented a splendid opportunity for incoming Chinese and Koreans. Several factors converged to enhance that opportunity. First, as with its vanishing neighborhood retail sector, America's vanishing ladies-garment industry left a plenitude of market niches for hard-charging, nonfastidious entrepreneurs able to produce goods at competitive costs. Second was the massive transfer of garment manufacture from the U.S. to Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and mainland China. This created an Asian business class conversant with American markets—high fashion included—and with its production and distribution systems. It was no great leap for an emigrating Korean or Chinese factory owner or manager to become a subcontractor in Los Angeles or on New York's Canal Street.

The third factor was cheap labor and cheap space. Long hours, and a certain indifference to the finer nuances of industrial regulations, were the key to profits no longer possible on New York's Seventh Avenue. Cheap space was found in the cubbyholes of the antique lofts and hulks of Chinatown and the Lower East Side; there are now more than 500 garment factories there. The industry soon spilled over the bridge into Brooklyn's old neighborhoods, hitherto unclaimed by the garment sector.

The cheap labor was drawn from a steady flow of Chinese female immigrants—the so-called FOB's (fresh-off-the-boat)—who began to arrive in great numbers after 1965. Women and girls traded their two-dollar-a-day jobs at the sewing machines of Shanghai and Canton for the five dollars or more an hour in the small factories of Los Angeles and New York.

Together with their Latino immigrant counterparts, Asians now form the backbone of what is left of the U.S. needle trades. To the despair of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, the FOB's are paid by the piece and work under "sweatshop" conditions, though these represent a considerable advance over the places whence they came. At any rate, the FOB's are a sufficiently productive labor force to preserve the lingering viability of what had once been New York's premier industry. To a greater degree than was true for the Jewish immigrant females of the 1900's, these are way-station jobs. The younger women, after acquiring proficiency in English and some savings, frequently move on to college or higher employment.

As it has been in most times and places, immigrant small business is co-ethnic. But seldom does co-ethnicity manifest itself in such distilled form as with Asians.

The most prominent example of ethnic capital-pooling is the Korean *kye*, sometimes spelled *keh*. These are local rotating-credit associations into which members contribute a fixed sum at fixed intervals and from which the contributors can withdraw stated sums to start or expand a small enterprise. In Los Angeles, a 1980 study of recent Korean immigrants observed that 80 percent were participants in *kyes*, and similar studies elsewhere show that a substantial proportion of the membership use the withdrawals only to supplement personal savings as the equity base for bank or trade credit.

More generally, the significant economic bootstraps are the helping hands of extended family and *landsleit* from homeland village or community. Each Asian business serves as nurturing ground and credit source for the next round of small businessmen.

The Asian-American business proliferates externally as it expands internally. The process is nicely exemplified by another Asian business specialty—motels. Outside of the larger cities, Indians and Pakistanis are progressively transforming the smaller, family-managed hotels and motels into an ethnic "franchise" as ubiquitous as the Korean greengrocery. Writes Thomas Muller, a leading observer of the new immigration:

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> A common pattern is for the men to work in industry, using their earnings to purchase motels to be operated by their wives and extended families. . . . By 1982 Indians owned over 3,100 hotels and motels across the land, 10 percent of all such establishments in the nation. These entrepreneurs found an economic niche in small motels that, under their previous ownership, could not withstand the competition from chains. Many native-born owners were simply not willing to devote the long hours and hard work necessary to remain in business; most, in fact, were thrilled to find someone willing to take the motels off their hands. Motels are considered good investments by Indians because the entire family can be utilized to run these establishments.

The rescue of faltering motels on the outskirts of Fresno and Sacramento and the resurrection of faltering food shops in the inner cores of Brooklyn and Baltimore are all of the same piece. Both reflect an often neglected economic truth: the basket of economic opportunity has no fixed limit; it is a variable, not a constant. Immigrants may or may not be keener than indigenous urban dwellers in discerning self-employment ventures. But their forte is radically to transform the economist's "production function," the equation that specifies the bundle of inputs required to obtain a dollar of output. Into that bundle goes a prodigious quantity of hard work by every family member, with all reconciled to the deferral of rewards.

As the new immigrants revivified the retail and other small-business sectors, they simultaneously revived the decaying areas around their enterprises. Like San Francisco's, New York's Chinatown has exploded; were it a separate city, it would count as one of the fastest growing in America. Chinatown now extends from the Manhattan Bridge to north of Houston Street and from Allen Street to west of Broadway. It pulsates with a loud heartbeat, a mass of people in motion not seen for a half-century or more. Los Angeles's Koreatown and Monterey Park, the Bay Area's Oakland, Queens's Flushing (New York's second Chinatown), and Brooklyn's Eighth Avenue (New York's third) have this in common: they all represent the comeback of fallen areas, ranging from the already bleak to the irretrievably moribund. St. George's Church in Flushing, whose congregation had been reduced to 120, now has 400; most of the newcomers are Asian-Americans. In proportion to their enrollment in schools, they tend to raise test scores and college-placement rates and lower dropout rates.

If a flocking instinct is the first principle of ethno-geography, dispersion is the second. As immigrants assimilate and ascend the income ladder, sooner or later they leave their ghettos to form ethnic satellites in more affluent and heterogeneous surroundings. Provided racial and religious discrimination are no bars, the third geo-ethnic stage is interspersion, immersion into mainstream neighborhoods with a consequent loss of visibility. But unless immigration is permanently cut off, neither the root enclaves nor the satellites ever disappear; they become, as do the bicoastal Chinatowns and Brooklyn's Polish Greenpoint, the initial staging areas for the newly arrived.

In Asia-America's progression from pariah to paragon, no change has been more dramatic than the subsidence of racial housing barriers and involuntary segregation. Common observation attests, and studies by Michael White of the Urban Institute confirm, that America's Asians are considerably more dispersed than its other minorities. The longer the period of residence, the higher is the dispersion index. To be sure, Asia-America is rife with root enclaves, the little Saigons, little Taipeis, Koreatowns, and Chinatowns that stud California and New York. But the velocity of interregional and intrametropolitan dispersal is remarkable. And even within metropolitan concentrations, there is a continuous dispersion to the outer ring of central cities and then to the suburbs.

One reason for the rapid interregional spread is deliberate national policy: the rules governing refugee admissions require dispersion programs lest undue burdens be imposed on the gateway cities. Another is the Asian-American tropism toward higher education. It assures that every university center, even in the smallest urban areas, will have a complement of Asians, the nucleus for further growth. A third centrifugal factor is the Asians' indefatigable search for fresh opportunities away from saturated Asian enclaves where rents and start-up costs soon soar.

More intriguing than interregional movement is an accelerating intrametropolitan spread from the sheltered enclaves and multiplying satellites to what would have been, a generation ago, hostile environments. Asian-Americans are shunned by few, if any, neighborhoods and, in turn, shun few neighborhoods. The affluent find no resistance in the expensive suburbs surrounding New York City or San Francisco, Seattle, and the District of Columbia. The less affluent go to places regarded as distinctly unchic, including the Bronx and Jersey City. Middle-income Asians have not encountered in Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, and other Euro-ethnic bastions the hostility that greets blacks. Westchester's poshest precincts have become a haven for better-off Asians, including golf-mad Japanese sojourners on U.S. assignment. Many of the gilded ghettos of Great Neck that since their founding were without more than token numbers of black families (and many villages not even that), now count Asians by the dozens, and each year brings a new group of entrants. New York's commuter railroads are not yet as Asian as is Queens's Number 7 subway line (the "Orient Express"). But in time they will be,

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more conspicuously on the 9:30 and 10:30 P.M. trains than on the 5:30.

THERE can be no question, then, that the massive transplant of human beings and human capital from Asia to America has enriched the nation as have few past migrations, and none as quickly or from so humble a beginning.

But a question does arise about this new immigration: if those who now number 7 million are so applauded, what will be the resonance when that number reaches 10 million and eventually 20 million or more? And it almost surely will. For the current migration from Asia is likely to be indefinitely prolonged: after years of ferocious infighting by equally opposed forces, Congress has small appetite to renew the battle by attempting a major revamping of the basic formulas now governing immigration policy and under which Asians have fared so well.

To peer at an America with double or triple its present Asian-ancestry population is to mingle speculation with extrapolation, especially in the area of electoral politics. Consumed by the quest to make their way in business and education and to raise up their extended families, the new Asians have yet to stretch and deepen the regional political base that thrust Asians (mainly Japanese) of an older migration into Congress and the national arena—Hayakawa, Matsunaga, Inouye, Mineta, and others. There is just one Asian member in the Los Angeles City Council and one high-level official in Sacramento; New York City and State have none at all. Nor have Asian-Americans been animated by the galvanic issues that swept America's Jews to the forefront of national politics—FDR and the Great Depression, Hitler and the Holocaust, civil rights and Israel.

Asian-American political reticence may come to an end with further naturalization and a new acculturated generation. One feature that is destined to change is the nation's political calculus as California becomes even more of a powerhouse in the Congress and the Electoral College and Asian-Americans become more of a powerhouse in California. Some politically mobilizing issues may also emerge. An outbreak of "yellow-phobia" would be one, and congressional tampering with the family-reunification priorities would be another. More powerful still would be violent internal strife and oppression in South Korea or the Chinese Republic. (Recall the stirrings in our Chinatowns during the Mao-Chiang Kai-Shek civil war.)

Another intriguing question: were Asian-Americans to politicize, where on the political spectrum would they land? The best evidence to date suggests that they are likely to support conservative rather than liberal causes. To be sure, five of the six Asian-ancestry delegates to the House and Senate are Democrats (though no flaming liberals). But both Reagan and Bush did quite well among the newer Asian concentrations, and survey polls indicate that with respect to a series of telltales such as capital punishment, defense expenditures, and affirmative action, the tilt is to the conservative. Thomas Muller points out, too, that considering from where most immigrants escaped, they tend to be generally anti-Communist. Though none are as fiercely so as Cuban and Soviet émigrés, there is little doubt where the preponderance of Asian-Americans stand.

Napoleon once said of China that it would be wise to let that sleeping giant slumber. He warned against the awakening of an exotic nation with an antheap population. He feared its capacity to raise armies in the millions and, reckless of their lives, to alter the world's balance of power. We now know that submerged in those human "antheaps"—not just in China but in other Asian countries as well—were human individuals, endowed with a high order of ability who required only the air of political and economic freedom to bring it to the fore.

A blessing for them, and a blessing for America.

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The Anti-Cold War Brigade

Arch Puddington

THE VIRTUAL collapse of East European Communism and the apparently irreversible decay of Communism everywhere else would seem to offer powerful vindication to those who advocated anti-Communism as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the postwar era. This would especially seem to be the case given the timing of the momentous events of the past several years. During the crucial decade of the 1980's, after all, the United States did *not* advance the favors, concessions, and reassurances which the proponents of détente advocated as the only realistic approach to relations with Moscow. Instead, under the Reagan presidency, America prosecuted the traditional policy of containment with a purposefulness not seen since the Truman years, even borrowing a page from the much-scorned rollback idea in its approach to Communist regimes in the Third World. Precisely how much influence these policies exerted over Communist world developments is a legitimate subject for debate; that they played some role, and probably a large one, would seem beyond doubt.

Nevertheless, a number of influential observers have argued that anti-Communism was irrelevant to the demise of the 20th century's most durable totalitarian system. A few have gone even further, asserting that Western anti-Communists, by providing ideological ammunition to hardline elements within Communist-party leaderships, actually impeded the process of change. Far-fetched as such arguments may sound, it should be remembered that the timing of Communism's great upheaval created a serious intellectual dilemma for critics of the cold war. Reagan's policies, these critics had confidently predicted, would not merely fail, they would almost certainly trigger a foreign-policy catastrophe of frightening dimensions, with nuclear war a distinct possibility. As we know, the maligned 80's concluded with more substantial prospects for real peace than at any time in the past 45 years. Small wonder, then, that a subtle tone of annoyance has crept into the commentaries of cold-war critics as they attempt to show how an approach guaranteed, in their eyes, to produce disaster had nothing to do in the end with what turned out to be a monumental triumph for democracy.

The answer of choice for most members of the anti-cold war brigade is to ascribe all positive change in the Communist world to Mikhail Gorbachev and to Mikhail Gorbachev alone. This, in any event, is Strobe Talbott's explanation. In a recent essay accompanying *Time* magazine's special "Man of the Decade" tribute to the Soviet leader, Talbott flatly denies that the Soviets were influenced by the military buildups, economic denials, or other measures applied by the U.S. in the post-détente era. Gorbachev, Talbott explains, was motivated almost entirely by his country's internal predicament and not by Western strategies to contain Soviet expansion. Furthermore, Talbott, operating most definitely in hindsight, now detects an inherent weakness lurking behind the brutality of the Communist system and the posturing of its leaders, a "brittleness" which would eventually have given way before the collective pressure of its oppressed subjects. The clear implication is that special Western efforts to undermine or squeeze East European Communism were unnecessary and possibly counterproductive.

Indeed, Talbott finds fault with the anti-Communist idea throughout the entire postwar period. Western policy, he asserts, was based on "a grotesque exaggeration of what the Soviet Union could do. . . . It was believed to be possessed of immense and malignant strength, including the self-confidence, prowess, and resources for the conduct of all-out war." Yet not everyone, he adds, succumbed to the fear-mongering of America's hardline zealots. There were men of common sense and moderate views whose advice, Talbott implies, was too often overwhelmed by the scare tactics of the hawks. It is these critics of the cold war to whom Talbott pays homage, with the provocative claim that "The doves in the Great Debate of the past forty years were right all along." (It should be noted that Talbott nevertheless invokes the possibility that Gorbachev might be replaced by a leadership that "will once again[!?] threaten the world with military intimidation if not conquest.")

Now Talbott does not stipulate exactly how the

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view of the doves differed from that of the hawks, except to suggest that doves were pessimistic about the ability of Western policy to modify Soviet behavior, and held "realistic" opinions about Soviet power. And he is somewhat vague, perhaps by intent, in identifying the prescient critics whose cries went unheeded over four decades. Presumably he has in mind figures more mainstream than, for example, Henry Wallace, whose tolerance for Stalin's moves led him to oppose the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, and prevented him from criticizing the 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. Yet Wallace, who ran for President under this banner on the Progressive party ticket in 1948, was the original dissenter from America's cold-war course, and his influence over succeeding generations of scholars and politicians was not insignificant.

TAKE the case of former Senator J. William Fulbright, a man long associated with a revisionist analysis of U.S. foreign policy. Writing in 1972, Fulbright had unstinting praise for Wallace's determined noninterventionist perspective, while dragging up the hoary charge that President Truman welcomed Stalin's aggression in Eastern Europe as a convenient rationale for the cold war. Fulbright's major concern in these early days of détente was what he saw as the immature unwillingness of America's cold warriors to accept the Soviet Union's domination over its European neighbors. "Insofar . . . as we raise false hopes with provocative propaganda, maintain high troop levels, and continue the arms race, we retard the natural process of European reunification, lingering morbidly and uselessly in the graveyard of cold-war relics."

That Moscow's imperial grip over the satellites was unnatural and, therefore, a threat to peace seems not to have occurred to Fulbright, who insisted, inaccurately as we now know, that the simple process of détente would induce the Kremlin to relax (but not surrender) its grip over Eastern Europe. Fulbright, in fact, went so far as to praise Nikita Khrushchev for having "defused" the Berlin crisis, without mentioning that the Soviet leader's solution was the Berlin Wall. In the meantime, to reassure the Soviets of our peaceful intentions, Fulbright proposed the withdrawal of American troops from Europe—in other words, the effective dismantling of NATO—and the liquidation of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Fulbright was especially churlish concerning RFE/RL, of which he wrote: "Purporting to show [East Europeans] that there is a better 'way of life' outside the 'Iron Curtain,' we foster futile discontent, not for any discernible purpose of policy but for purposes of ideological mischief. In this way we detract from the broader purposes of our own policy and of world peace, which require us to live in the greatest attainable harmony with the Communist governments of the world. . . ." In general, Fulbright linked the U.S. and the Soviet Union as equally dangerous superpowers, with Soviet internal repressiveness balanced, and perhaps more than balanced, by America's proclivity for involvement in faraway, unimportant places like Vietnam.

That Fulbright has been proved demonstrably wrong in his views on Soviet expansionism (he, like most others at the time, saw the USSR as a status-quo power), on the internal stability of the Soviet system, and on Eastern Europe has done little to tarnish his reputation as a "wise" and "prudent" authority on foreign affairs. Likewise, former Senator George McGovern, despite the debacle of his 1972 presidential campaign, remains an honored figure within the Democratic party, and is even often referred to as the party's "conscience"—a clear sign that many continue to share his world view, if occasionally put off by the shrillness with which it is presented.

Like Fulbright (who, it was widely believed, would have been named Secretary of State had McGovern won the presidency), McGovern is a confirmed revisionist regarding relations with the Soviets and an unapologetic admirer of Henry Wallace. The satellization of Eastern Europe, he has written in his memoirs, "was a Soviet reaction, however regrettable, to two world wars," as well as to "implacable Western hostility" to the Communist ideology, and he is convinced that the West, and particularly America, bears prime responsibility for the cold war through such ill-conceived moves as the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

McGovern's reputation in the early 1970's, of course, was not the result of his forbearing attitude toward Stalin's postwar maneuvers but came, rather, from his outspoken opposition to American involvement in Vietnam. Yet neither did his anti-war opinions derive solely from revulsion against the bloodshed in Southeast Asia. McGovern, in fact, was something of an enthusiast for Third World Communism, identifying in the leaders of Vietnamese Communism and in Fidel Castro qualities akin to those found in America's Founding Fathers. Thus it is not surprising that McGovern looked benignly on the prospect of Communist inroads in Africa; these he saw as the product of an intense and altogether understandable nationalism, having little or nothing to do with the Soviet Union's plans to expand its power in the underdeveloped world.

IF Fulbright and McGovern fairly represent the views of critics of the cold war in Congress, Richard Barnet can be said to occupy a similar position on the intellectual Left. A founder of the radical Institute for Policy Studies, Barnet gained respectability as a commentator on foreign affairs through his books and essays, many

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of which have appeared in mainstream magazines like *Harper's* and the *New Yorker*.

Barnet's most important study of U.S.-Soviet relations, *The Giants*, was published in 1977, a time of growing superpower strain and mounting disillusion with détente; it was Barnet's clear intent to revive support for that embattled concept. Barnet, however, cleverly attempted to redefine détente, or, more precisely, what Americans could and could not expect from the détente relationship. Unlike its champions in the political and business worlds, who were convinced that the détente process would produce sweeping changes in the Soviet system, Barnet was highly skeptical of the prospects for serious Soviet reform, no matter what policies were adopted in Washington. The Soviet people, he contended, supported the system, which they credited with steady improvements in the socioeconomic sphere. He also came close to dismissing human-rights concerns as irrelevant, asserting that the "vast majority of Soviet citizens would probably choose substantive freedoms over procedural freedoms if they were forced to opt for one or another." And he raised the curious argument that a Soviet Union "more like us," that is, more democratic, might well be less prone to peaceful coexistence with the rest of the world, a point which the current generation of Soviet reformers, and even Gorbachev himself, would certainly regard as strange.

Barnet's misreading of Soviet society in the late 1970's was equaled by his errors in judging Soviet global aspirations. Despite Leonid Brezhnev's repeated assertions that détente was never meant to signal a weakening of the ideological struggle, Barnet insisted that the Soviets had no plans to embark on expansionist adventures outside the established European confines of the empire. Dismissing the Soviet-Cuban enterprise in Angola, then well under way, as a "special case," Barnet flatly concluded that "the Soviet model is not for export." In the event, within two years the Soviet model, or some variant thereof, was to be embraced by radical regimes from Afghanistan to Ethiopia to Nicaragua, and implanted therein with generous Soviet-bloc aid in such crucial sectors as the military and the secret police.

Ultimately, however, Barnet counseled the détente course on the interesting grounds that America really had no other choice. Although not declaring so openly, Barnet seemed to agree with the Soviets that the correlation of forces had shifted in Moscow's direction—not because of Soviet strength, but rather because of American weakness in the post-Vietnam period. As for the American future, Barnet struck a note of deep pessimism, qualified only by his smugness in delivering the verdict. The American economic system, he mused, seemed incapable of solving "the problems of advanced industrial civilization," and he referred to the problem of "maintaining liberal capitalist democracy in one country in a world that is clearly not heading in that direction." And in a pronouncement which strikes one as laughable in the light of what we knew even then about the irrationality of socialist economics, Barnet ascribed support for détente to the "growing realization among capitalists and state socialists that neither system can survive in an economically divided world."

It is only fair to note that, in the troubled late 1970's, Barnet was far from alone in miscalculating the durability of capitalist democracy. Nor was he the only observer to view the human-rights issue as potentially subversive of détente. Yet in retrospect, it would appear that on this issue, if no other, Barnet was partially right. As public attention became increasingly focused on the plight of opposition figures, the repression of religious believers, the absence of basic worker rights, the abuse of psychiatry, and the seemingly endless list of prohibitions and restrictions built into the Communist system, it became practically impossible to argue for the legitimacy of the Soviet system—or so it would seem.

But where Barnet's misgivings were motivated by fear that an intense scrutiny of Soviet internal practices might alienate Americans from détente, David Riesman, another prominent dove, worried that Carter's policies might destabilize a system he saw as beleaguered and unsuccessful. The human-rights emphasis, Riesman contended, even when advanced by a liberal Democratic President, carried with it the potential to revitalize "the never wholly-defeated cold-war mentality of ethnocentric and patrioteering Americans." More to the point, an American-inspired human-rights drive might trigger unmanageable forces within the Soviet Union, a dangerous prospect in light of that country's nuclear capability. Thus Riesman argued straightforwardly for a human-rights double standard: however much we might admire Andrei Sakharov and his fellow dissidents (and Riesman clearly did admire them), prudence dictated that we downplay or ignore the violations of humane standards committed by the Soviets and, presumably, the East European "fraternal" regimes as well.

To the doves' disquiet over the human-rights controversy was added, as the 70's drew to a close, alarm over evidence that American tolerance for Soviet adventurism in the Third World was reaching the breaking point. Pro-Soviet regimes were gaining throughout the underdeveloped world, and while Soviet assistance was not always crucial to the seizure of power, the prompt dispatch of weapons, ammunition, and advisers (including Cuban proxies) was essential in preventing the overthrow of unpopular regimes.

Furthermore, the public perception of Third

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World revolution had altered significantly as evidence of the sinister nature of the new radical regimes mounted. The neat parallels between right-wing and left-wing dictatorships lost all credibility at a time when Latin American military juntas were giving way to democratically elected governments, while, from the Communist world, the news told of atrocity piled on atrocity: killing fields, boat people, freedom flotillas, politically engineered famines, peasants uprooted and shunted about by the millions. It became difficult to argue, as Richard Barnet had done a few years earlier, that the reasons for Soviet involvement in the Third World were "traditional, not revolutionary," or that Moscow was "much less interested in how these societies will organize themselves than in reducing U.S. influence over them and encouraging them to support the Soviet line on specific international issues."

And then, of course, there was the invasion of Afghanistan, an action which laid to rest once and for all the idea of the USSR as a status-quo power while giving rise to the suspicion that the Brezhnev Doctrine, which posited the irreversibility of Communist rule, had been extended beyond the Soviets' traditional European imperium.

Yet even Afghanistan failed to shake the conviction of the advocates of détente that "normal" relations with Moscow still rested on a "mature" American tolerance for Soviet world conduct. America's foremost socialist intellectual, the late Michael Harrington, coined the phrase "defensive aggression" to distinguish the occupation of Afghanistan from presumably more dangerous forms of conquest. And while few echoed Harrington's prescription for meeting the Soviet challenge—he urged U.S. aid to the Sandinistas and the radical Salvadoran FMLN!—the notion that Moscow was acting in a fundamentally defensive manner met widespread acceptance, most notably from George F. Kennan. Indeed, Kennan speculated that neither Brezhnev nor Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had approved of the invasion—a noteworthy point in light of recent revelations by Soviet sources that Brezhnev and Gromyko were two of just four Soviet leaders who were responsible for the invasion decision, which has now been described by no less an authority than the present Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, as immoral.

Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard went a bit further. Writing in 1981, when the outlines of the Reagan administration's foreign policy were taking form, Hoffmann scoffed at the idea that an approach based on a military buildup and anti-Communist rhetoric could advance the interests of the democracies. According to Hoffmann, "the key issue for the rest of the century is revolution," and the sooner the U.S. accepted this difficult reality, the better. Hoffmann advised against trying to destabilize revolutionary regimes; an aggressive posture, he warned, would only stiffen the resolve of Third World radicals and make them less open to change. America would "have to take advantage of complexity," and this meant, among other things, withholding aid to the Afghan mujahedeen unless accompanied by a diplomatic solution—a course which at the time entailed continued Soviet domination of Afghanistan. Ever the pessimist, Hoffmann declared that a strategy which tried to prevent the Soviets from changing the correlation of forces or from driving a wedge among the NATO allies was doomed to failure, and thus not worth the effort.

HOFFMANN was not alone in overestimating the staying power of Third World Communism. Many hardliners, too, believed that reversing the pro-Soviet drift would require a long and arduous struggle. Others, however, felt that America's early experience with the containment policy was altogether relevant to the problems facing the U.S. at the beginning of the 80's. While not inattentive to the indigenous roots of revolution, these observers were convinced that the survival of the new Communist regimes was tied to their positions within a pro-Soviet international movement of Communist and radical states. If containment were to be applied in the Third World as it had been applied in Europe, they believed, the Soviet momentum might well be checked, and even turned around. This thesis proved correct: what came to be known as the Reagan Doctrine emerged as one of the great successes of American foreign policy, stemming Soviet gains in the Third World and ultimately rolling back Communist influence everywhere save in such hidebound regimes as Cuba and North Korea.

Yet if the 80's are to be remembered as the time when Communism met its final reckoning, they will also be recalled for the loud and angry attacks against the policies which hastened Communism's demise and the assumptions on which these policies were based.

The imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, for example, evoked a new doctrine from the Western Left. Dubbed "shared responsibility," it rested on the thesis that the West, through its decision to deploy Euromissiles as a counter to Soviet SS-20s, bore a measure of responsibility for Soviet acts of oppression by stimulating an atmosphere of general European tension. Among more mainstream political commentators, Ronald Steel advanced a widely shared proposition when he wrote that since Poland served as "an integral part of the Soviet bloc and Soviet security system," the West must adopt a realistic stance and "resist giving [the Poles] any false hopes of armed support that we have not the slightest intention of honoring." Steel left the unmistakable impression that no option lay between passivity and war.

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Some considerable consternation was also expressed over the Reagan administration's arms program. The veteran diplomat Averell Harriman claimed that the "grim reality of Reagan administration diplomacy" was that the world might face "not the risk but the reality of nuclear war." Harriman also foresaw the day when Soviet and American troops would square off against each other in the Middle East. Strobe Talbott, while avoiding Harriman's overheated language, at the same time expressed the conviction that America's hostile stance toward the Soviets was counterproductive. He thus favorably quoted a Soviet expert on the United States as saying that American policies were negatively affecting the correlation of forces "within the Kremlin" by strengthening the hands of the militarists while weakening the détente faction.

Others besides Talbott accepted the line—insinuated with a new shrewdness and sophistication by Soviet "Americanologists"—that Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric and arms buildup were reinforcing the position of Kremlin hardliners. Not coincidentally, this propaganda campaign reached its hysterical height when it became clear that NATO intended to proceed with the deployment in Western Europe of Pershing and cruise missiles, despite Soviet saber-rattling and despite the massive anti-nuclear activities of the Western peace movement.

For American specialists predisposed toward skepticism over Reagan's course, the Soviet response was Exhibit A in the evolving case against administration policies. Raymond L. Garthoff, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, returned from a 1983 visit to the Soviet Union with the prediction that "we must soon expect to see off our coasts Soviet submarines and perhaps surface ships armed with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles—pilotless drones that can strike our territory." He also foresaw the deployment of Soviet ballistic missiles capable of reaching American soil in a few minutes, along with entirely new missile systems in Europe—all, presumably, in response to the impending emplacement of the Euromissiles. According to Garthoff's alarming report, the Soviets had all but abandoned hope of improved relations with Washington. His Soviet acquaintances expressed outrage over the Reagan administration's "exploitation" of the recent catastrophic downing of a Korean airliner, our call for greater independence for Eastern Europe, our questioning whether the Soviets were a legitimate part of Europe, and our refusal to acknowledge that the world correlation of forces had *shifted* and that the Soviets now enjoyed the "status of a great power with global interests." All this, said Garthoff, had put Soviet proponents of détente "on the defensive"; where once the Soviets rewarded journalists who made favorable references to the United States, now the Soviet media were replete with "vitriolic" commentary on American policy. Garthoff, in fact, was among several Americans to report having been told by Soviet sources that women had actually broken down and wept for fear of the imminence of war after an especially bellicose speech by then-party chief Yuri Andropov.

Other Americans were concerned less with Soviet war-scare campaigns than with dispelling the notion that the Soviet system was confronted with a burgeoning internal crisis, and was thus less successful than Western capitalism. This, at least, seemed to be the intent of two of liberalism's elder statesmen, John Kenneth Galbraith and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who reached remarkably similar conclusions after separate Soviet tours.

Galbraith, it should be kept in mind, was, if not the originator of the theory that American and Soviet societies would one day "converge," then certainly the doctrine's most dogged popularizer. During his 1984 visit, he found fresh evidence for the relevance of the convergence theory. Galbraith noted that the Soviet economy had made "great material progress," something he discerned from both official statistics and the "general urban scene." The statistics were the very same ones which have now been revealed by Soviet authorities themselves as false. As for the "general urban scene," Soviet émigrés returning from visits to Leningrad and Moscow today express astonished dismay at the abysmally deteriorated condition of buildings, streets, sidewalks, and the overall atmosphere of filth and disarray. Yet Galbraith was also impressed by "the incredible exfoliation of apartment houses" (Gorbachev himself, by contrast, has described housing as the number-one domestic problem), as well as by "the general aspect of restaurants, theaters, and shops." "The Russian system succeeds," Galbraith concluded in a declaration of stunning inaccuracy, "because, in contrast to the Western industrial economies, it makes full use of its manpower."

So too Arthur Schlesinger after a 1982 visit. Life was "more agreeable . . . than I expected. There have been improvements in amenities. I found more goods in the shops, more food in the markets, more cars on the streets—more of almost everything, except, for some reason, caviar." For Schlesinger, these surface signs of well-being led to the observation that "those in the U.S. who think the Soviet Union is on the verge of economic and social collapse, ready with one small push to go over the brink, are . . . only kidding themselves." In typical mirror-image style, Schlesinger also noted that our "wishful thinkers" had their counterparts in the Soviet Union among those who believed that "capitalism was approaching its final crisis." There were, he mused, "wishful thinkers" on both sides, who "always see

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other societies as more fragile than they are. Each superpower has economic troubles; neither is on the ropes."

Schlesinger also detected positive signs of political change. He described the admission of Scandinavian peace marchers as a "significant departure," and saw progress in the fact that five-day-old copies of leading Western newspapers could be purchased in the major hotels—by foreigners, of course, not ordinary Russians.

Schlesinger's principal message, however, was a restatement of the cliché about the danger to mankind posed by the respective superpower hardliners:

> . . . just as Soviet hardliners supply ammunition to American hardliners by invading Afghanistan, deploying SS-20s in Europe, and distorting the political evolution of Poland, so American hardliners give Soviet hardliners a hand by trying to block the European pipeline, threatening technology embargoes, and getting for themselves the largest military budget in American peacetime history. The hardliners in each country reinforce each other, strengthen each other's case, increase each other's budget, enlarge each other's influence. Their common interest in crisis puts them in tacit and effective alliance against the rest of us. . . . Surely it is not too late to stop the international conspiracy of hardliners who, in weird lockstep, are marching the rest of us down the road to extinction.

For the Sovietologist Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton, the crucial issue of the 80's was the necessity of America's accepting the Soviets' rightful place in world politics. Cohen earned something of a reputation by attacking the Sovietology profession for systematically excluding the views of those who, like himself, dared to contradict the cold-war view of the totalitarian nature of Soviet society. The absurdity of this charge is amply demonstrated by Cohen's own career. His writings are regularly published by the most prestigious newspapers and journals, and he serves as adviser on matters Soviet for both a television network and a major publishing house.

Cohen was especially vocal in dismissing the idea that the only realm in which the Soviets had actually gained "parity" was the military. Thus in 1983 he wrote with contempt of the growing perception that the Soviet Union faced a looming socioeconomic crisis. While conceding certain shortcomings, Cohen claimed that the post-Stalin leadership enjoyed a high level of popular support for having made good on five basic promises: national security, law-and-order, the identification of Russian nationalism as a basic element in Soviet ideology, comprehensive welfare protection, and improved living standards for each succeeding generation.

Cohen denied that the Soviet Union was a "closed" society, and had no hesitation about using official statistics—whose fraudulence, as already noted, has subsequently been admitted by Soviet economists—as the basis for his thoroughly wrong analyses. Moreover, he simply ignored the careful research conducted by Western demographers and economists which suggested serious deficiencies in the economy and welfare system. Nor, obviously, did Cohen have the faintest understanding of the nationalities issue, having given no thought to how the non-Russians reacted to the growing Russification of Soviet ideology.

In any event, Cohen's confidence in the relatively smooth functioning of the Soviet economy provided one of many inevitable opportunities to attack "our own cold warriors" whose thinking

> serves only to undermine the reformist cause in the Soviet Union. It results in an inadvertent but perilous axis between their hardliners and ours, an axis whose first victims are the advocates of Soviet reform. Thus, the struggle between the friends and foes of Soviet reform is also a struggle between the friends and foes of détente—in the Soviet Union and in the West.

One requirement for real détente, according to Cohen, was the adoption of value-neutral language in characterizing the two systems. No longer should we refer to our "government" as opposed to the Soviet "regime." Similarly, we should correct the habit of describing NATO as comprised of allies while describing the Warsaw Pact as made up of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and we should discard the practice of referring to American "information" as opposed to Soviet "propaganda" and "disinformation."

Cohen also differed sharply from his fellow Sovietologists who believed that terror and coercion provided the glue which held the Soviet system together. He advocated a wholesale rethinking of the "relationship between the party-state and the society in the Soviet Union, including the political system's remarkable stability." Those who fail to "perceive anything organic in that relationship," he said, "still overemphasize the coercive aspects of official Soviet policies and politics while underemphasizing consensual ones."

To Cohen's disdain for Americans of an anti-Soviet disposition was added an air of condescension toward Soviet dissidents, the only exception being those, like Roy Medvedev, who had remained loyal to the socialist system. The dissidents, he wrote, had "no program, or even guiding ideas, for changing the Soviet system," and he favorably quoted a "socialist dissident" who asserted that local party secretaries had a firmer grip on everyday reality than Andrei Sakharov and the other members of the democratic opposition. Yet in recent months, under democratic conditions, many of these ex-dissidents have overwhelmingly defeated local party functionaries in elections throughout the Soviet Union.

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Nor did Cohen anticipate the coming generational change in Kremlin leadership as necessarily ushering in a period of improved superpower ties. The reason, predictably, was the obduracy of America's cold warriors. "The bridge-building Brezhnev was on the defensive," Cohen wrote in 1982, besieged by an "Iron Curtain Russophilism" with its retrograde ideology reinforced by American grain embargoes, military buildups, the Sino-American axis, and similar provocations. One year before Gorbachev was named party leader, Cohen was predicting that "there is the prospect of a Soviet leadership devoted to cold war and no longer believing in détente," again due to America's foolish hardline course.

If it would be difficult to find a Soviet authority who has been more consistently inaccurate than Cohen, it would be equally hard to find an expert who, at various stages of his career, has been more astute in analyzing the Soviet system than George F. Kennan. Even today, Kennan's reputation derives to a great extent from his writings on U.S.-Soviet relations in the early cold-war years, most notably his famous "X" article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947. These early writings bear careful rereading today, for what Kennan wrote four decades ago remains highly pertinent to the momentous developments of the past few years.

Kennan saw the Soviet Union at the conclusion of World War II as a highly ideological, heavily militarized, expansionist, and dangerous totalitarian state. Yet Kennan also detected important weaknesses, which if exploited by a firm and patient Western response, held the seeds of profound difficulties for the Soviet future. In an eerily perceptive passage, Kennan noted:

> . . . if disunity were ever to seize and paralyze the party, the chaos and weakness of Russian society would be revealed in forms beyond description. For we have seen that Soviet power is only a crust containing an amorphous mass of human beings among whom no independent organizational structure is tolerated. The present generation of Russians has never known spontaneity of collective action. If, consequently, anything were ever to occur to disrupt the unity and efficacy of the party as a political instrument, Soviet Russia might be changed overnight from one of the strongest to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies.

Here it must be stressed that Kennan believed that Western policy had a crucial role to play in stimulating this process of Soviet decline. In the passage for which he is best remembered, Kennan prescribed "a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with firm counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world."

Kennan also gave serious thought to what specific changes in conduct might reasonably be expected of the Soviets in order to gain them acceptance as a normal participant in world affairs. And while cautioning, in a 1951 *Foreign Affairs* article, against the American tendency to demand nothing less than a constitutional democracy mirroring our own, Kennan set forth an agenda far-reaching not only for its own time but for the entire cold-war period until the onset of *glasnost*. Two of Kennan's stipulations were particularly noteworthy. First, the Kremlin should lift the Iron Curtain and be "tolerant, communicative, and forthright in its relations with other states and peoples." Second, the empire should be dismantled, entailing freedom not only for the nations of Eastern Europe but for the Baltic states as well.

Although Kennan revised his recommendations for U.S. foreign policy rather considerably over the years, his analysis of Soviet reality remained on the whole impressive. He warned that détente would not elicit enhanced internal democracy, a letup in the Soviet military buildup, or abandonment of support for "wars of liberation." And he continued to detect serious internal weaknesses behind the triumphalist bluster of the aging Soviet leadership. These included problems in maintaining control over Eastern Europe, festering resentments among the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union proper, economic malaise, a loss of popular faith in Communist ideology, and an alarming rise in alcoholism and other manifestations of anti-social behavior.

Kennan, in other words, saw the Soviet Union as suffering from the internal contradictions and imperial overstretch which would, one might reasonably imagine, make it vulnerable to a renewed, assiduously applied, policy of containment. Yet by the 1970's the Kennan who once sounded the alarm over Soviet internal repression and global expansionism had adopted a stance of considerable forbearance toward Moscow's conduct—in large measure, it seems, out of an obsession with the possibility of nuclear war. Kennan now went so far as to argue that the principal threat to peace rested with the very existence of atomic weapons, rather than with the closed, highly suspicious, and globally aggressive nature of the totalitarian world's leading power. He was thus unfazed by the export of Communism to the Third World, which he rationalized as the normal conduct of a Great Power and, somewhat contradictorily, as a defensive gesture—defensive in the sense that a Soviet failure to respond to the needs of Third World radicals would jeopardize the USSR's position as the leading world Communist power. As for the plight of the dissidents, Kennan spoke with an air of resentment over Western criticism of

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Soviet human-rights shortcomings, preferring to emphasize the tolerance exhibited toward opposition by the post-Stalin leadership.

But perhaps the most disturbing reflection of Kennan's intellectual journey was his attitude toward the suppression of the Polish Solidarity movement in the late 1970's and early 80's. He blamed the 1981 imposition of martial law not on the Soviets, who had ordered the action as the only alternative to invasion, but on Solidarity's overzealous rhetoric. Kennan urged that General Jaruzelski "be given a chance to see what he can do," while unequivocally discouraging expectations of Solidarity's return to legal existence: "Such a reversion would wholly demoralize the army and the governmental apparatus, such as it is. It is questionable how effective it would be in assuring regular and vigorous economic activity. . . ."

It is one of the ultimate ironies of the cold war that Kennan, some thirty years after having written so eloquently of Eastern Europe's plight under Moscow's "oppressive yoke," after having looked forward to the "breakup" of Soviet power, now found the Soviet empire's instability a source of concern rather than hope. Kennan's reasoning, moreover, reflected the general drift of dovish thought on Eastern Europe. Indeed, while the doves demanded that America cast off its cold-war mentality, they themselves were advancing a set of ideas for dealing with the Soviets which, by accepting an unreformed Soviet system, were guaranteed to maintain the cold-war status quo. As policy proposals, the code phrases of the early 80's—building bridges, managing superpower relations, establishing a dialogue, finding areas of common agreement, détente without illusions—amounted to an admission of the impossibility of fundamental change. Similarly with the greatest myth of all, that peace could be forged through the arms-control process. Totally missing in all the sophisticated analyses was any recognition that the cold war was inextricably linked to the nature of Soviet Communism, and that proceeding beyond the cold war required a radical transformation of the Soviet system.

ANOTHER great irony is that while the doves couched their arguments in moral terms, and denounced their hardline antagonists as dangerous and immoral militarists, they themselves failed to recognize, or to acknowledge, the fundamental immorality of the Communist system. When they did admit that internal Soviet repression was a problem, they almost invariably went on to point out that under Stalin things had been worse. The criminal nature of Communist Third World regimes was brushed aside with snide references to Chile or South Korea. The massive Soviet arms buildup, which thoroughly frightened friendly governments in Europe and Asia, was seen as no worse than our own. The forty-year Soviet domination of Eastern Europe—the root cause, after all, of the cold war—was simply ignored wherever possible, or, as in the cases of Senators Fulbright and McGovern, explained away as a "regrettable" but "understandable" reaction on the part of the Soviets to a hostile outside world.

These fatal flaws in the doves' world-view help explain their attitude of coolness toward Soviet dissent. For while the personal courage and intellectual integrity of the dissidents were treated with respect, their critique of Soviet political reality evoked muted disapproval. As the doves saw it, the dissidents represented an educated elite whose demands for sweeping democratization betrayed an alienation from the Russian masses, for whom, it was implied, and occasionally stated outright, political pluralism and the rule of law really did not count for much.

Yet the truth is that it was the Soviet dissidents, along with the East European democratic opposition, who exhibited the clearest understanding of the corrupt and dangerous qualities which were inherent in Communism, and who recognized that the goals of peace and East-West amity were unattainable so long as Communism ruled over half of Europe.

As far back as 1975, Andrei Sakharov wrote prophetically of the gathering crisis in Soviet society, of the system's "complete failure to live up to the promises" of the official ideology, of widespread venality, poverty (this, at a time when most Western observers denied the existence of poverty in the Soviet Union), and "an ostentatious and inefficient class structure." These problems, Sakharov believed, were compounded by the militarization of Soviet society. He rejected out of hand any parallels between the role of the military in America and the USSR, warning that it was the "supermilitarization of the Soviet Union that necessitates high military spending throughout the world." Nor could this pervasive militarism be diminished through superpower arms negotiations. For Sakharov, the essential point was the need for "general political changes" in the direction of democratic rule, a necessary step since it was Soviet totalitarianism which "facilitates the nation's expansionist capabilities and simultaneously secures its antidemocratic stability."

Sakharov also had a direct message for those in the West who entertained the illusion that détente could proceed without major Soviet reform. He warned against "détente without democratization," and cautioned against the tendency to equate peace with arms control, asserting: "Security cannot be limited to the purely military aspects of détente."

Sakharov's views were echoed by another prominent dissident, Andrei Amalrik. "The democratization of the Soviet Union is the only guarantee

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of security for the West," he wrote, adding commonsensically: "So long as questions of war and peace are decided by ten men who are not accountable to anyone, no accords, no matter how favorable on paper, will allow the Americans and Europeans a good night's sleep." Amalrik challenged a principal dovish commonplace, that foreign isolation invariably brought forth the Soviet Union's worst instincts. To the contrary, Amalrik argued, political isolation tended eventually to stimulate reform: ". . . it was only after having experienced all the negative aspects of isolation taken to extremes that the USSR [in the post-Stalin period] embarked on a course of domestic transformations and cultivation of foreign relations." As for détente, Amalrik objected to the Western tendency to equate it with peace. Peace, he observed, rested on the balance of nuclear power, and could as easily be maintained under cold-war conditions as under détente. The latter, he proposed, could only be justified if it led to the "betterment of the world," a concept with much broader implications than arms treaties or trade agreements.

THE WEST may not always have acted with the necessary consistency or resoluteness in its dealing with the Soviet Union. But neither, in the end, did the free world permit the anti-cold war brigade's prescriptions to take root. If those prescriptions had prevailed, the cold war would almost certainly still be on, and the collapse of Communist totalitarianism would have been delayed instead of being hastened, as in fact it was by the policy of containment pursued under Reagan, to the immense benefit of everyone in the world.

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Was Spinoza a Heretic?

André A. Aciman

BENEDICT DE SPINOZA (1632-77), the frail, frugal, reclusive lens-grinder, may have been the most passionately dispassionate thinker in the history of the Western mind. No philosopher was so rigorously cautious and chary with his words; none trimmed his thoughts down to such irreducibly geometric crystals that he could claim "to consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner as though they were lines, planes, and solids." No philosopher, certainly, has been more intoxicated by the mind's ability to think and intuit everlasting truths: "When the mind regards itself and its own power of activity it feels pleasure."

Spinoza was born into a family of well-to-do Jews who had fled the Portuguese Inquisition and settled in the Netherlands. Seventeenth-century Calvinist Holland had proved a clement haven for these Sephardi Jews, offering not only religious freedom but also the opportunity of engaging in lucrative commercial ventures outside their former home on the Iberian Peninsula. Holland itself had recently seceded from Spanish rule and was becoming a commercial power, so it is not surprising that members of the Jewish Spanish-Portuguese colony, given their education and their familiarity with international commercial and diplomatic practices, should have prospered there.

Jews in Holland managed their internal affairs discreetly, hoping to arouse as little Calvinist scrutiny as possible. In fact, most of them—who because of their ancestors' forced conversion to Catholicism on the Iberian Peninsula were known as *conversos*—wanted nothing more than to put the past behind them and return to their ancestral religion. Amsterdam Jewry, while retaining its cosmopolitan, multilingual, and secular orientation, had become doctrinally orthodox.

It was in this community that the young Benedict, born Baruch, Spinoza received an excellent Jewish education and became thoroughly versed in Hebrew Scripture and medieval Jewish philosophy. His father, a prominent member of the community, was also the warden of the Jewish school the young boy attended. But Spinoza's stunning intellectual gifts were obvious from the very start, and it was only a matter of time before the precocious youth ventured beyond the confines of his Jewish studies. Descartes, science, and the vibrant intellectual climate of the mid-17th century were irresistible allures.

The precise circumstances which finally led in 1656 to Spinoza's excommunication from the Jewish community as a heretic are not clear. What is known is that the young Spinoza fell under the influence of several men, each of whom helped, in some cases perhaps inadvertently, to propel him away from established Judaism. An early cultural model was the perfectly respectable Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, a humanist diplomat who had met Oliver Cromwell and was a friend of both the famed jurist Hugo Grotius and the painter Rembrandt. Then there was the German ex-Jesuit, Francis Van den Enden, Spinoza's Latin teacher. It was under Van den Enden's tutelage that Spinoza became interested in the natural sciences and in the spirit of free inquiry which animated his mentor's circle. He also associated with Collegiants, a Christian sect practicing a tolerant and non-dogmatic faith.

THE Jewish community approved neither of Spinoza's association with freethinking and Christian intellectuals like Van den Enden nor with the sort of biblical inquiry in which Spinoza was beginning to engage, especially after having read works by the French Calvinist *converso* Isaac de La Peyrère. But what exercised the community even more was Spinoza's friendship with Dr. Juan de Prado, a Jewish heretic and Deist who had recently fled Spain.

The Jewish community of Amsterdam had experienced religious sedition before, most notably in the case of Uriel da Costa, a fugitive *converso* from Portugal who had converted back to Judaism while still in Portugal and who then fled the clutches of the Inquisition to start a new life in the Netherlands. Once in Holland, however, da Costa, whose knowledge of Judaism was rudimentary, began to attack the belief in the immortality of the soul and a host of other rabbinical precepts which he could not find anywhere in the written Torah and therefore regarded as violations of Jewish law. Like Spinoza after him, da Costa had

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a sharp eye for biblical inconsistencies. He also criticized the wardens of established Judaism and was vocally intolerant of superstitious and obscurantist notions which, he said, passed for religious adherence among members of the fold. As a result, Uriel da Costa was excommunicated by the Amsterdam rabbinate—not once, but twice. (He has left a moving autobiographical account of the scene of his recantation in the Amsterdam synagogue.) So humiliated was he by the public flogging at the synagogue, and so overwhelmed by daily harassment, doubt, and an overwrought religious sensibility, that at the age of fifty-five he shot himself in the head.

Spinoza was eight years old at the time. Then, in his early twenties, it became both his and Prado's turn to face the authorities. Prado pleaded with them and disavowed his views; rumored subsequently to have relapsed to his old ways, he was finally excommunicated in February 1657. Spinoza never did recant; after being placed under a probationary ban, he was excommunicated in July 1656.

Excommunication put many hurdles in Spinoza's path. From that moment he was no longer able to live or run a business from within the Jewish community. He was never married and was temporarily banished from Amsterdam. Spinoza is supposed to have written a defense of his views, but the text no longer exists; it is believed that he incorporated many of its arguments into his *Theological-Political Treatise*.

Until his death in 1677, Spinoza was to live quietly in Rijnsburg, Voorburg, and The Hague, earning his living by grinding and polishing lenses. He devoted much of his time to writing and to friendships which developed as a result of his philosophical interests. He published very little; the only work to appear bearing his name was a short treatise on Descartes. But his circle of admirers was not small, and several sought (unsuccessfully) to provide him with an income.

In light of Spinoza's own political views, it is not surprising that he should have befriended the liberal-minded Jan de Witt. Both men advocated religious tolerance and freedom of thought, and both supported secular constitutional forms of government. It was to defend de Witt's ideas against the Calvinists that Spinoza wrote his *Theological-Political Treatise*, wherein he undertook to expose the ills that result when governments suppress free thinking by appealing to religious authority. The work was not only a criticism of the prevailing anti-liberal climate in Holland, but clearly reflected Spinoza's personal views and experiences vis-à-vis the rabbinate.

Spinoza, in fact, went one step further. Not only did he criticize bigotry and its appeals to the Bible, but he questioned the authority—and the authorship—of the Bible itself. The *Treatise*, published anonymously in 1670, was immediately condemned. Nor did it win any converts to Jan de Witt's cause: in 1672, both Jan and his brother Cornelius were savagely lynched by a frenzied mob in The Hague. A year later, Spinoza himself, suspected of treason, was very nearly lynched by a similar mob. Wisely he refrained from publishing his *Ethics* during his lifetime. In 1677, having attained some degree of fame among European thinkers, Spinoza died of consumption, aggravated by the dust he had inhaled as a lens grinder.

SPINOZA's distrust of the unenlightened, as expressed in his *Treatise*, reflected a deep-seated ambivalence. On the one hand, the multitude worshipped an anthropomorphic God whose miracles, prophets, sacred texts, and institutions seemed conceived to keep mankind in a state of perpetual bondage to error and confusion. On the other hand, Spinoza realized only too well that religion—not philosophy—and revelation—not reason—were the fitter means to instruct the public in those things which reason itself recognizes as good. Spinoza's views on this subject are as complex as they are slippery, and not always easy to reconcile. Though he advocated an idealized form of republican democracy, he was so frightened of public anarchy that he regarded the willful submission to authority as preferable to "agitation and rebellion." Just as it was more reasonable to teach the multitude unreasonable beliefs than to despoil them of belief altogether, so in politics it was more reasonable to submit to an unreasonable state of affairs than to sow sedition.

Spinoza, then, wielded a deft double pen. The secular tone is unmistakable; he was, after all, one of the earliest propagators of the modern democratic spirit:

> The ultimate aim of government is not to rule, or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work without injury to himself and others. No, the object of government is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security, and to employ their reason unshackled; neither showing hatred, anger, or deceit, nor watched with the eyes of jealousy and injustice. In fact the true aim of government is liberty.

But if it is impossible to miss the secular in Spinoza, it is equally difficult to overlook a strain that can only be called religious. Spinoza advocated not only man's right to be free and to think freely, but man's duty to think well, to think the truest thoughts. For herein lay ultimate salvation: in man's capacity to transcend his own finitude, his own temporality, and unite with the knowledge of the true essence and causes of things. By means of such knowledge, man not only arrives at a clear and distinct apprehension of things as

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they are but enters into communion with Nature, with God, with the infinite Mind.

Indeed, there exists a strange collusion between the secular and the religious in Spinoza. Philosophy is the intellectual love of God, said the man who was branded an atheist. The road to that "union" with the infinite intellect—long, tricky, and elaborate—spans the entirety of *The Ethics*, but at the end of it, all dualisms and contrarieties overcome, we are led to see how body and mind, thought and extension, the eternal and the temporal, God and Nature, are one.

IN HIS new two-volume work on Spinoza,* Yirmiyahu Yovel, a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, tries to fit Spinoza's notorious complexity into a mold of his own devising. The concept of salvation through philosophy, he writes, aside from illustrating the philosopher's secularism, is altogether grounded in his culture as a Jew. And not only as a Jew: Spinoza's thinking, according to Yovel, betrays specifically Marrano "patterns," Marrano conflicts, and Marrano solutions. Moreover, these same "patterns" appeared later in Spinoza's philosophical "inheritors," and indeed came to be the informing characteristics of the minds responsible for shaping all of modern European consciousness.

Now, what does Marranism have to do with Spinoza? Spinoza's ancestors, as we have seen, were *conversos*—Jews living in Spain or Portugal who had converted to Catholicism either forcibly or for convenience. Most of these *conversos* became Christian in name only; the vast majority continued to remain observant Jews in secret. They were called Marranos from a word meaning apostate, hypocrite, or pig.

Conversion, particularly in Spain, had proved a wise move in the late 14th and 15th century, for as New Christians, Jews were finally allowed to enter into mainstream Spanish society. And so they did, accumulating wealth, plucking coveted diplomatic, administrative, and financial posts, reaching legal, literary, medical, and especially ecclesiastic prominence, and contracting alliances with Spain's leading aristocratic families. As Spinoza himself was to write about them in his *Theological-Political Treatise*:

> As these renegades were admitted to all the native privileges of the Spaniards, and deemed worthy of filling all honorable places, it came to pass that they straightaway became so intermingled with the Spaniards, as to leave of themselves no relic or remembrance.

The list of famous *conversos* and descendants of *conversos* in the Golden Age is so long and has such intricate reaches in so many domains of Spanish cultural life that it must sometimes seem that any Spaniard of distinction either had, or might have had, or was at one time or another suspected of having, Jewish blood.

Over time, many Marranos shed every vestige of Judaism to become thoroughly assimilated Catholics. In Spain, some achieved fame as Christians: Santa Teresa de Avila, San Juan de la Cruz, Juan de Valdés, and possibly even Tomás de Torquemada, the founder of the Catholic Inquisition. The father of Uriel da Costa was one such devout Christian. As for those not so thoroughly gone, by the beginning of the 17th century they were so isolated from the rest of world Jewry, and the pressures to conform were so overwhelming, that their clandestine religion, when they practiced it, had become stripped to its bare essentials. Without Hebrew, without books, without even a proper recollection of ritual, the Marranos observed a rudimentary, garbled form of Judaism which relied heavily on what Yovel terms "Christian symbols and categories." Queen Esther became Saint Esther, and the concept of salvation through the law of Moses became a flimsy readaptation of the idea of salvation through Christ.

Above all, what distinguished these hybrid Jews was a certain habit of mind, what Yovel terms "Marrano patterns":

> Marrano patterns include a this-worldly disposition; a split religious identity; a metaphysical skepticism; a quest for alternative salvation through methods that oppose the official doctrine; an opposition between the inner belief and the outer world; and a tendency toward dual language and equivocation.

These "patterns" would also characterize the tortured and ambivalent psychology of those who, like Uriel da Costa, eventually found their way back to Judaism if not beyond it. Indeed, Yovel for his purposes here includes in his definition of Marranos not only Jews forced to wear a Christian mask but those who, by dint of impersonating another faith, ultimately became neither Jewish nor Christian. Where did the fundamental allegiance of such Jews now lie? "The unassimilated Marrano is the true wandering Jew," Yovel writes, "roaming between Christianity and Judaism and drifting between the two and universalism."

YOVEL understands well the sinuous and elusive turns, the duplicity, the cultivated prudence, the striking capacity for embracing opposites that typify the condition characterized by the scholar Carl Gebhardt as the "split Marrano consciousness." Yet, as persuasive as his analysis of Marranism may be in its own terms, it applies to a very small number of Jews in the 16th and 17th century, and it is not in the least clear that Spinoza was among them. He was not, after all, a Marrano himself, had never known the

* *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, Princeton University Press. Volume I: *The Marrano of Reason*, 244 pp., $24.50; Volume II: *The Adventures of Immanence*, 225 pp., $29.50.

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Office of the Inquisition, had never even set foot on Iberian soil. He was born and educated in Holland, and unlike most Marranos in Spain and Portugal, he had also received an excellent Jewish religious education.

Yet Yovel insists that Spinoza had "internalized" the Marrano "frame of mind," both through osmosis, as it were, and more directly by fraternizing with that other tormented and divided Jew from Spain, Dr. Juan de Prado. In effect, Prado, in Yovel's theory, serves as the missing link between Spinoza the native Dutch Jew and Spinoza the Marrano.

For Yovel, Spinoza not only shared Marrano ambivalence, he transposed its tensions to an even higher plane. For he was an alien among aliens, an ex-orthodox, now secular, reputedly atheist Dutch Jew writing in Latin and busily erecting an irreducibly logical system which, in its purported aim to free mankind from spiritual and intellectual bondage, would further alienate him from Jews, Christians, and co-nationals alike. As a thinker, then, Spinoza was almost bound to practice ambivalence, caution, and dissimulation in the highest degree.

In his work, says Yovel, thanks to the "Marrano-like splits" and tensions operating from within, Spinoza deployed with exquisite cunning strategies eminently familiar to all Marranos: concealing his ideas about government, religion, man, and God by means of textual devices intended to ward off uninvited, uninitiated, unenlightened, and hence potentially unfriendly readers, all the while trying to seduce and placate them with palliative verbal measures. He was always addressing a mixed audience, with whom he was obliged to converse and negotiate in a polyphonic mode. This is what Yovel means by the expression "Marrano of reason": one who practices the art of reason in secret, or at least in the privacy of a select few.

Most of what Yovel has to say about Spinoza as a "Marrano of reason" is not new. With certain differences, the philosopher Leo Strauss suggested something very similar forty years ago. Yet Yovel is determined to prove it, and he devotes 127 of the 204 pages in his first volume to the task. The task is not an easy one—and he does not succeed at it. Indeed, his method is not so much to *show* the Marrano "split" in Spinoza as simply to repeat over and over again that it exists.

As for concrete examples of Marrano "equivocation" itself, what Yovel puts forth is so frothy and diffuse that it utterly fails to convince. In particular, he devotes a 42-page chapter to a discussion of a single literary work (admittedly, a masterpiece) written by a *converso* at the very beginning of the 16th century—the play *La Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas. Other critics, most notably Stephen Gilman, Americo Castro, and Fernando Pallardó, have written on Jewish aspects of *La Celestina*. For his part, Yovel sets out to show how the work betrays a Marrano preoccupation with masks and deceit and, on a broader level, how it "reflects a metaphysical world view which is neither Christian nor Jewish." He looks for figures of doubleness, anything ranging from punning to irony, any reference to concealment, prudence, equivocation, hypocrisy. He seizes on every detail he can, and then imputes an ironic or subversive twist to it, asserting that it "can be" or "probably is" intended to be read as a hidden reference to former Jews. Thus, one of the characters in the play says he is no longer able to trust anyone. Yovel: "[This] is also a cardinal rule of survival among Marranos under the Inquisition: trusting everyone is a fatal mistake." Another character says, "They call an overtly devout man a hypocrite." Yovel: "This admonition fits the Marranos equally well."

Yet, amazingly, Yovel never mentions non-*converso* plays or literature in which double identity and doubletalk play important roles. In fact, the number of such Renaissance and Baroque works staggers the imagination. Probably no period in history has placed such an inordinate stress on equivocation and casuistry as did the Counter-Reformation. This is evidenced not only in literature but in the works of the myriad Jesuit pamphleteers let loose in the Christian world, and in the actions of Catholic spies who, when captured in Protestant nations, were able to lie without impugning their faith by resorting to elaborate forms of silent chicanery. (Montaigne, Bacon, and Pascal were eminently familiar with their modes.) And if the Jesuits used dissimulation to further their cause, so did their adversaries within Catholicism, men unsatisfied with the state of the Church but not quite ready to attack it openly. These practiced what went under the name of "legitimate" or "honest" dissimulation, voicing their doubts in private, avoiding public confrontations, and continuing to observe their religion in conformity with established usage. After all, as Otto Brunfels wrote in 1527, majority opinion "either despises or is incapable of understanding the truth." Did Spinoza think differently? Was not his motto *caute* (cautiously)?

Among Protestants, too, we find the same habit of mind Yovel has fastened upon as quintessentially Marrano. There was, for example, what Calvin called Nicodemism. The Nicodemites were men who had converted to Protestantism but secretly continued to adhere to the Roman Catholic Church. According to Carlo Ginzburg in his book *Il Nicodemismo* (1970), the subtleties and ambiguities of Nicodemism made it a "religion for intellectuals." Nicodemites were temporizers, men who (as the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines them), "comply for the time; who seek to gain time; who adapt or conform to the time and circumstances." One of the works cited in the

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OED also appears in Ginzburg's book: *The Temporysour (that is to saye: the Observer of Tyme, or he that changeth with Tyme)*. Marranos were also temporizers. In his *The Present State of the Jews* (1675), Lancelot Addison, Joseph Addison's father, writes the following:

> That there are many such Temporizing Jews especially in Spain and Portugal, I have been assured from their own mouths; and what is more observable, some have ventured to affirm, that there want not Jews among the very Judges of the Inquisition. [Quoted by Cecil Roth in *History of the Marranos.*]

Jews may have been the original temporizers of early modern Europe; but by the time Spinoza was writing, the practice had become cast in a predominantly Christian mold. One could as easily call Spinoza a "Nicodemite of reason" as a "Marrano of reason."

Finally, totally overlooked by Yovel is a book in Spinoza's library. Among the works by Spanish authors—including Cervantes, Montalván, Góngora, and Quevedo—was one by the Jesuit moralist Baltasar Gracián, entitled *El Criticón*. Gracián was to the 17th century what Machiavelli had been to the 16th. No man was shrewder, none offered a more detailed crash course in hypocrisy and "double dissimulation"; his *Criticón* is a travelogue in the realms of deceit and double-dealing. That Yovel should seek to anchor his case on the *converso* Rojas, whose work appeared 150 years before Spinoza's excommunication, yet fail to mention the Jesuit Gracián, whom Spinoza had almost certainly read and who died just two years after Spinoza's excommunication, suggests the shakiness of his ground.

The attempt to tie Spinoza's thinking to Marrano "patterns" and Marrano antecedents must therefore be judged a failure; intriguing on its face, the proposition remains to be proved. And the same goes *a fortiori* for Yovel's attempt in his second volume, *The Adventures of Immanence*, to project these same Marrano "patterns" forward in time and on the basis of them to stake a claim for Spinoza as the spiritual father of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and the entire tradition of modern secularism.

By "immanence" Yovel seems more or less to mean the secular or, as he terms it, the "this-worldly." Spinoza, for him, personifies the Jew who is not necessarily an adherent of a doctrinal religious community but who nevertheless is indissolubly fused to that community's heritage. Such a Jew solves the resultant schism in his soul by redefining his own allegiance to law, land, people, and community. No longer does the concept of redemption, for example, entail passage to another world, but it is "understood as a collective event in the immanent world." Ironically, according to Yovel, this very redefinition, which Spinoza was the first to accomplish, has a Jewish warrant; in fact it is endemic to Judaism itself, which is a religion already and always predisposed to "immanentism":

> In its deep structure, . . . the program of the *Theological-Political Treatise* entails a kind of universalization of Judaism. Judaism, as a "political" religion and as a religion of "commandments only," becomes the paradigm for what must take place in the world as a condition for rational progress. The message of Judaism is extended into a universal system in which historical Judaism, though abolished as a particular religion, fundamentally informs the system that replaces it.

In other words, Spinoza's rational secularism, and by extension the secular outlook of legions of Jews today, may look like "heresy," but it is actually a kind of fulfillment, if not a higher realization, of Judaism itself.

Once again, the proposition has a certain surface charm. But whatever can be said for or against it as an abstract idea, in Yovel's exposition its persuasiveness depends crucially on the cogency of his prior hypothesis concerning a Marrano "mind" invested by a deep-seated schism which in turn paved the way to the secular-immanentist world view. Unable to make his case with the materials he has chosen to fashion it from, Yovel in his second volume turns once again to a whole series of scattered, broad, and needlessly reductive parallels and contrasts that in the end obfuscate more than they clarify.

Spinoza is a thinker notoriously difficult to understand. Bayle, Voltaire, Diderot, Novalis, Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Coleridge are only some of his more eloquent misreaders. Yirmiyahu Yovel, then, is in distinguished company. But in approaching this philosopher one is still well advised to heed Leo Strauss's warning against "the attempt to understand Spinoza better than he understood himself." For the failure which inevitably results from such an attempt "exposes one to the danger of understanding, not Spinoza, but a figment of one's imagination."

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Surviving Affirmative Action (More or Less)

Frederick R. Lynch

In the mid-1970's, I became increasingly interested in what I assumed were two sociologically compelling questions: (1) how did white males (and their families, coworkers, and friends) respond to reverse discrimination?; and (2) how were the media portraying affirmative action? I conducted the research and later published the results while teaching in temporary faculty positions on the Los Angeles and San Bernardino campuses of the California State University (CSU) system.

Throughout this period, the nineteen-campus CSU empire became caught up in an intensifying affirmative-action crusade involving blatant race, ethnic, and gender preferences in recruiting faculty, staff, and students. Thus, I was engaging in critical studies of policies championed by my own employer (and most alternative academic employers). This was risky business. Scattered reports from critics of affirmative action made it obvious that academic freedom on the topic was fragile even for tenured scholars, and the tight job market for sociologists rendered the kind of research I was doing doubly dangerous. Nevertheless, curiosity ultimately prevailed over fear and anxiety.

For me this research saga illuminated the powerful taboos which have dominated the American intellectual landscape for more than twenty years, and I learned a great deal from the experience. I would, however, never do such a thing again. My career has been badly damaged. Worse, I have watched a political steamroller flatten civil liberties and due process as it has moved through institutions designed to be bastions of traditionally liberal values and forums for the free discussion and rational analysis of ideas. The academic and intellectual communities which once embraced Martin Luther King's call to judge an individual by the content of his character, not the color of his skin, now do precisely the opposite. They bow reverentially to the gods of tribalism, while also doing almost everything possible to suppress any challenge to their current orthodoxies.

My interest in affirmative action was whetted in the early 1970's when I began hearing anecdotes about reverse discrimination. Watching for television and newspaper reports on this remarkable policy, I came upon very few. With the exception of some polemical essays, sociologists also paid relatively little attention to the topic. Throughout the 1970's, the anecdotes continued to increase as affirmative-action rhetoric became more strident. Certainly this was the case in the CSU system, where I started teaching as a temporary member of the sociology faculty in 1977.

Like most American colleges and universitities, the CSU campuses developed affirmative-action plans, hired affirmative-action officers, and billed themselves as "affirmative-action/equal-opportunity employers." (It was not until the mid-to-late 1980's that the term "equality" was eclipsed by the more hard-line vocabulary of "equity," "diversity," and "access.")

In spite of all this, few of my colleagues in the CSU knew much about affirmative-action programs on their own campuses or in the wider society. One reason was that these programs—in the CSU as elsewhere—had been formulated and implemented quietly. Legal ambiguities wrought by Supreme Court vacillation promoted the use of informal pressures and "discretion" rather than codified or systematic measures.

A second reason for lack of concern among my fellow sociologists with affirmative action was the slowdown in hiring that set in during the mid-1970's. Sociology, the most popular major of the 1960's, was by now becoming one of the least popular. Indeed, the CSU system lost nearly 90 percent of its sociology majors from the mid-1970's to the mid-1980's. In combination with the cuts forced by Proposition 13, the inevitable result was a hiring freeze.

For most of my colleagues, the hiring freeze meant that no white male they personally knew had been denied a job because of his race or gender. If they spoke of affirmative action at all, they did so in vague, simplistic terms. They talked of the policy as the "ideal situation" of an equally qualified white male competing for a position with an equally qualified female or minority candidate—in which case the latter candidate should be given the job. That the realities of affirmative action might involve outright preference of less qualified (or unqualified) women or minorities was dismissed. Nor could these Ph.D.'s in sociology grasp the elementary economic fact

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that, in a tight labor market, affirmative action must necessarily operate in a zero-sum context: when one person was hired because of race, ethnicity, or gender, others were thereby excluded on the same discriminatory grounds.

Yet to recognize that affirmative action could not help without hurting ran up against an absolute dictum of the Marxist/feminist orthodoxy which had crept into the everyday academic world view of the 1970's and 1980's: the idea that only certified minorities—especially blacks and women—could be victims. To suggest that white males were being injured by affirmative action invited righteous scorn and contempt—even among white males themselves.

The question that intrigued me was how these same (or similar) white males would respond when and if they themselves encountered reverse discrimination. Would they protest? Would they accord one another support and understanding?

In 1984, I obtained a small grant from the Institute for Educational Affairs which enabled me to hire two research assistants. In the ensuing months we found our way to 34 white males in a variety of occupations who had good reason to believe that they had been the victims of reverse discrimination in seeking jobs or promotions. After dropping two of the 34 because it was not clear that affirmative action had been a decisive factor in their cases, we wound up with 32 subjects. The data we got from them were supplemented by background interviews with a dozen personnel or affirmative-action officers, employment counselors, and corporate executives. Many informal interviews with others who learned of the research and wanted to talk added to our sense of what was happening.

By coincidence, our 32 formal interviews equaled the number of college-student participants in a laboratory experiment which had been conducted in 1980 by a sociologist named Stephen Johnson. Johnson discovered that white male students who had lost a puzzle-solving exercise to a fictitious competitor expressed more hostility toward the victor when told that he was black and had been given a bonus score by the experimenter to compensate for his cultural disadvantages. The student subjects, however, expressed less hostility toward black victors than toward white ones when told that they had lost because of the competitor's superior performance.

Suggestive though they were, Johnson's laboratory results were simply too limited to predict the real-world effects of reverse discrimination. Practically no one could truly guess at the responses we would find "out there." Using a semi-structured interview format—which let the subjects discuss their experiences in their own words—we discovered a wide and deep spectrum of responses ranging from acquiescence to anger to protest.

The vast majority—20 out of 32—simply endured reverse discrimination without protest, though many were quietly angry. Among the other twelve, six quit the jobs in which they had encountered discrimination; four protested, including three who took legal action—to no avail; and two circumvented barriers through other organizational means.

Our subjects were not angry white racists eager to take to the streets. On the contrary, the mostly middle-class males we interviewed felt bewildered and isolated by what had happened to them. Hardly a one of them was willing to voice any open antagonism toward affirmative action. Why?

First, they feared being labeled "racist" if they complained about programs that purportedly redressed past discrimination. In fact, almost to a man they took pains to explain to the interviewers that they understood and deplored the history of racism in America. Yet many had sustained real career injuries and felt betrayed by the system. Said a middle-management state worker: "A lot of us were sold a bill of goods. We were told if you went to college, you could write your own ticket. . . . But . . . affirmative action has lowered standards to the point where education almost counts against you. . . ."

Unlike minority or female victims of discrimination, white males could not necessarily count on in-group support. Wives aside ("My wife is mad as hell; she's angrier than I am"), only half reported any such support from friends and co-workers.

This seems to be why teachers selected by computer for transfer in a massive racial-balancing plan by the Los Angeles Unified School district were especially bitter. Commented one: "You found out who your friends were. I found I didn't have as many as I thought." Said another: "My friends and co-workers didn't know how to handle this. They wanted to empathize but [as political liberals] felt cognitive dissonance." A third stated dryly, "People don't like victims."

Deeply ingrained norms regarding silent, "manly" behavior and individual responsibility have crushed any sort of collective awareness and class action by white males. "When it hits you," a community-college instructor stated, "you don't want to admit it at first. Instead, you think it must be something in you. You doubt yourself. You repress it, try to forget it." No one wanted to be accused of "alibiing."

A Ph.D. in political science and a once aspiring university professor (now a government worker) articulated a common concern: "Why didn't I say anything about it? . . . Pride, I guess. I didn't want to make excuses." Many others feared for the future of their careers if they vented their objections. They felt that if they did not "rock the boat," things would work out later.

Another key factor in keeping silent was the fear of not being believed. Reverse discrimination simply sounded too out-

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landish and incredible without external validation by the mass media—and the mass media were not providing such validation.

This neglect by the news and entertainment industry—especially in the 1970's—was quickly confirmed even before we began interviewing. I simply counted the number of articles on affirmative action indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* from 1968 to 1980, and the number of minutes on the network newscasts as tabulated in the *Vanderbilt Television News Index and Abstracts* (from its inception in 1972 through 1980). What I discovered was that, until the *Bakke* case moved to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1977, there was about one article per year in each of the major newsweeklies and about twelve to fifteen minutes per year (and sometimes much less) on the networks on topics related to affirmative action. There was a slight fall-off after *Bakke*.

Qualitative evidence reinforced quantitative data. In comparison with other race-related issues, especially the school-busing battles, affirmative action was not box-office. It was treated as a non-issue and rarely, if ever, mentioned in press coverage of the 1980, 1984, and 1988 presidential campaigns, not even in cover stories by major news magazines about Jesse Jackson. As for commercial television, on those few occasions when affirmative action was dealt with—such as a 1975 episode of *All in the Family*—it was portrayed in its "ideal" form and in highly sympathetic terms.

There were also several issues to which affirmative action seemed "naturally" related, but where it remained the other shoe that never dropped. For example, very few reporters or commentators noted the clash between the egalitarian thrust of affirmative action and the drive for higher standards in education and business. And, until the late 1980's, few journalists ever pointed to the role of affirmative action in promoting discord in the Democratic party.

Yet by the mid-1980's, the emergence of blue-collar, white, male "Reagan Democrats" compelled the guarded attention of political analysts and pollsters. Thus, after the 1984 Reagan landslide, Michigan Democrats commissioned Stanley Greenberg to study "Democratic defection" in their state. Greenberg and his associates gathered discussion groups of white, working-class Democrats and posed a series of questions designed to assess their political mood. Asked, "Who do you think gets the raw deal?" they responded:

> "We do."
> "The middle-class white guy."
> "The working middle class."
> "Cause women get advantages, the Hispanics get advantages, Orientals get advantages. Everybody but the white male race gets advantages now."

and:

> "I have been here all my life working, paying taxes and the whole shot, and I can't start my own business unless I have 30 percent down on whatever I want to buy. I have the experience on the job, I have put in for openings, and they have come right out and told me in personnel that the government has come down and said that I can't have the job because they have to give it to the minorities."

Greenberg and his sponsors were stunned and chagrined by this fury over affirmative action among working-class whites. Clearly preferential treatment had poisoned traditional Democratic appeals to "fairness" and "justice," and it also seemed that racial preferences were turning white working-class males against government programs in general. Similar data were obtained in a 1985 "Democrats Listening to America" poll of 5,500 voters, as well as in a replication of the Michigan study in 1987.

The response of the Democratic party to findings such as Greenberg's was instructive: it tried to suppress the reports. As the social critic Charles Murray observed of the ill effects of affirmative action: "Hardly a policy-maker or academic anywhere wants to examine these results and fewer still want to speak of them."

In discussing the hostile reception accorded in the 1970's to his work on school busing (which demonstrated that it was causing white flight and other problems), the eminent sociologist James Coleman suggested that when senior scholars act as a lightning rod for controversial research, it makes the world safer for their less secure juniors laboring in the same field. As I have good reason to know, Coleman was right. For it took a number of books and articles by well-known scholars to pave the way for my own work.

Nathan Glazer was the first important sociologist to break the ice, with *Affirmative Discrimination* in 1975. Nearly a decade later came Charles Murray's *Losing Ground*, which appeared just as I was launching my interviews. During these same years, articles criticizing affirmative action also began to appear here and there, making it easier for me to publish two of my own articles and to edit a special issue of *The American Behavioral Scientist* on the subject.

But then, in a deeply ironic twist, I began discovering that I myself had joined the subjects of my own study as a victim of reverse discrimination. Which is to say that while my résumé continued to grow with more publications and references, I was unable to move beyond temporary faculty status to a tenure-track position.

No doubt my career struggles were in part linked to the huge surplus of baby-boomer Ph.D.'s. Furthermore, I had a Ph.D. from the University of California at Riverside, not the more prestigious UC-Berkeley. And I was growing older. But there could be little doubt that reverse discrimination was a major cause of my stalled career.

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Once, for example, I was informed by a plainly discomfited chairman that I had lost a position at Sweet Briar College strictly because I was male. On another occasion the department chairman at Pomona College told me that the only sociologist he could hire was a black. On yet a third occasion, Occidental College abruptly canceled an interview, later notifying me (and several other candidates) that it had hired a female "native of Jamaica."

Making matters even worse, there was my research on affirmative action. Job nibbles usually ceased the moment I mentioned it. When I was interviewed at a seven-sisters college in the early 1980's, the chairman pleaded with me: "Please, I want you to get this job. Don't talk about your affirmative-action research." A scheduled interview at a Southwestern university was suddenly canceled in 1987 after the dean learned of the topic of my research. In 1990, the political implications of my research sabotaged an otherwise successful interview at a large Midwestern state university.

To keep my research afloat, I needed financial support, but initial queries to such major foundations as Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie met with bewilderment or contempt. Fortunately, smaller, less ideologically orthodox foundations like Earhart and Sarah Scaife were more responsive. Help from Earhart made it possible for me to complete the project and analyze its results in a book, *Invisible Victims: White Males and the Crisis of Affirmative Action*. The editors at Greenwood Press were more willing to take a risk with such a manuscript than several larger publishers who hinted or admitted outright that their firms subscribed to a "party line" on this issue.

At first, my colleagues treated my complaints about reverse discrimination exactly as the few complaints made by the subjects of my research project were treated by the people around them: as a form of "alibiing." But by the late 1980's, acknowledgment of race-and-gender pressures became more explicit. Universities openly began to advertise "targets of diversity" and other set-aside positions for minorities and women.

Then, in the late 1980's, limited hiring began again in sociology and related fields at both CSU Los Angeles and San Bernardino. Suddenly, colleagues who had once dismissed complaints about reverse discrimination were now instructed to implement such practices.

In 1986, 19.2 percent of newly-hired, tenure-track CSU faculty were minorities and 34.8 percent were women. By 1988, 23.4 percent of new hires were minorities and 38.4 percent were women. Since there have been few female, black, or Hispanic Ph.D.'s in the high-demand fields of physical science, business, engineering, and math, most female, non-Asian minority faculty were likely to be hired in education and in the glutted, low-demand humanities and social sciences. It is reasonable to assume that administrative prompting to hire females and minorities created pressures—however subtle—against hiring white males.

Less subtle were pools of set-aside faculty positions reserved for minorities and females established at San Bernardino and some other CSU campuses. In 1989, a black female (*sans* Ph.D.) was hired by the sociology department to fill such a set-aside position, with a high salary and reduced teaching load which included classes I had taught for several years. Since I was directly affected, I was able to check out the futility of legal redress as reported by some of my interview subjects. Their accounts were grimly confirmed. The representative of the State Fair Housing and Employment Commission rationalized the CSU set-asides as a legally acceptable attempt to bring its work force into "balance" and I was informed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that Cal State's use of set-asides was "voluntary affirmative action." Unless I had direct, "smoking-gun" evidence that I had been denied employment because I was a white male, nothing could be done.

Interestingly, both of these defenses of CSU's set-asides were offered *after* the Supreme Court, in *Richmond* v. *Croson*, specifically limited the use of voluntary set-asides by state or local government agencies. No wonder, then, that Cal State Northridge saw no risk in running a large ad in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* announcing that it was "setting aside a pool of faculty positions to allocate to those departments that identify well-qualified minority candidates for either full-time tenure track or lecturer appointments." The CSU system has also provided 200 minority and female Ph.D. aspirants with up to $30,000 each through a set-aside forgivable loan program.

My subjects' accounts of union paralysis on reverse discrimination were also confirmed by my own experience. Our fledgling faculty union was even more strident than the CSU in its calls for "diversity, equity, and affirmative action." The union was content that the CSU's programs be merely "legally defensible." Publicly, it would take no stand on reverse discrimination; privately, there was recognition of the problem, a little anguish, and no action.

"People still can't deal with this issue," a UCLA sociologist recently told me, "they don't want to be critical." Indeed they don't, as I and so many others have learned from bitter personal experience.

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Incident at Carpentras

Roger Kaplan

Is France in the midst of an anti-Semitic wave?

Jean Kahn, the president of CRIF (*Conseil représentatif des institutions juives de France*, i.e., the French equivalent of the American Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations), thinks that the answer is yes, that "there is an escalation of anti-Semitism in France." And he cites "graffiti, threats, gasoline bombs thrown at synagogues, attacks on cemeteries, particularly in Alsace. . . . What happened at Carpentras is not new."

Jews have lived in Carpentras, in the south of France, since at least the 1st century, which is to say even before there was a France. This past May, the ancient Jewish cemetery there was desecrated in a particularly odious way. Yet in response to this outrage (the term by which the event was headlined in *Libération*, a left-wing daily paper with a circulation of over a million), the entire French political class, with one significant exception, and virtually every editorialist in the country said more or less what President François Mitterrand said after visiting the home of Joseph Sitruk, France's chief rabbi: "I came to him as one does when there is a death in the family." Furthermore, an appeal by a Jewish organization brought 200,000 people into the streets on less than 48-hours' notice.

The exception within the political class was Jean-Marie Le Pen, the president of the *Front National* (FN), a growing xenophobic party which also contains a serious current of anti-Semitism. As if to heighten alarm about Le Pen, a few days before the Carpentras desecration, Jacques Médecin, the mayor of Nice, had made a derogatory remark ("I have never met a Jew who did not accept a gift, even when he did not like it. . . ."). This was a case of adding insult to injury, since Médecin made the remark just after having ostentatiously played host to an FN congress at which a conspicuous guest was Franz Schönhuber, a former Waffen-SS officer who until recently was the leader of a right-wing West German party called the *Republikaner* and who has spoken of the Jews as the "fifth occupying power" in Germany.

In addition to such phenomena, there are also a number of French academics who deny that the Holocaust took place, and there are journalists who write things like, "Denying there was a Holocaust doesn't make you an anti-Semite," and, "Is it against the law to say someone is cheating? It depends on whether you are talking about pâté producers who are faking, or Jews."

Does all this add up to a danger? Of course there are anti-Semites in France, and there is always some danger, practically everywhere, in being targeted simply as a Jew. It is also true that there is less rhetorical self-restraint in France than there used to be, now that the "taboo" imposed by the Holocaust has worn off. A report prepared for the French Premier last spring noted that while anti-Semitic acts remain relatively few, there seems to be a clear increase in verbal threats of all kinds. At the same time, however, many if not most politically consequential people in France are willing to stand up and be counted on the proposition that their country must not serve the ends of the Jew-haters.

Although the situation in France today is novel, to understand what has been going on here one has to reach back to the time of the Dreyfus Affair—when, as is often overlooked, the partisans of Captain Dreyfus won the day. True, the anti-Semites (or anti-Dreyfusards) got their revenge decades later when the Nazi puppet regime in Vichy was set up in 1940. But their triumph was short-lived, and its sweetness was immediately spoiled by the bitter experience after 1945 of being, if not shot, then purged, jailed, disgraced, and deprived for years of civil rights. Ever since, the old anti-Semites have been burning for another round of revenge.

Those in the vanguard of the anti-Dreyfusard-Pétainist-collaborationist tradition do not, as far as anyone can judge, have a truly substantial posterity. The people in leadership roles who are playing out this tradition are old men or, in a few instances, their sons—the *Front National*'s "scientific council" includes individuals drawn from the so-called New Right, which in reality is the old racist tradition dressed up in "ultraliberal" clothing. In some respects they all seem to be caught up in some gruesome family tragedy. On the other hand, they write and they, and especially their followers among France's disgruntled, vote—in large enough numbers so that they could conceivably become part of a winning coalition.

For in addition to its history, France has its present. One of the world's great empires has shrunk in less than a generation's time to a small hexagonal territory at the tip of Europe. A country that was predominantly agricultural as late as the 1940's has become an industrial and service-sector power. A highly centralized state, which for better or for worse had a homogeneous character, intellectual and cultural as well as administrative,

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has become fragmented, decentralized to some extent, and (in the nightmare of some) "multicultural."

It is noteworthy that along with these demographic and cultural shifts, the Jewish community in France has grown into the world's fourth largest* (and Islam has emerged as the country's second religion). This, however, has in some ways contributed to making France more, not less, tolerant than at any time in its past. The French today really are less sure of the superiority of their civilization than they used to be; perhaps more significantly, there is little evidence that they care a great deal about their civilization's rank in the world, at least to the point of making it a fighting issue. But here, precisely, is the paradox: tolerance may be producing diminishing returns in the sense that xenophobes, raising the question of whether the French are not being asked to give up too much of themselves in order to be nice to others, touch a nerve that Le Pen is able to exploit.

This is not to say that xenophobia and anti-Semitism are always the same thing. Xenophobia can in certain circumstances be taken a long way in France, while programmatic anti-Semitism is almost universally viewed as demented. Every time Le Pen shows his frankly anti-Semitic side, he repulses those trying to convince themselves he has become respectable. It is mainly the French Left that has an interest in blurring the distinction between xenophobia and anti-Semitism, in order to make it that much harder for anti-Le Pen conservatives to take a principled "nationalist" position.

IT IS often said that France must be anti-Semitic because where else in Europe during World War II did the locals voluntarily pass anti-Jewish laws before the Nazis even asked them to? This thesis is not false but it lacks nuance and perspective. An anti-Semitic party which had not been able to win an election, but which was propelled into power under the impact of the military and moral collapse of France in 1940, took advantage of the fact that the Nazis had a gun to the country's head to promulgate laws that never would have passed a democratic legislature.

This is not to dismiss as uncharacteristic a terrible chapter in French history, and by and large the French do not dismiss it. They remind themselves of it, as they did a few weeks ago when an enterprising reporter at *l'Express*, the country's leading newsweekly, reconstructed the deportation to a transit camp in the Loire valley that followed the infamous round-up by the French police of Jews in Paris in July 1942. The story was a painful one, soberly reported. It did not bring out any new historical facts. Rather, it brought out once again—and this is probably something that cannot be done too often—the peculiar mix of indifference and cowardice and moral exhaustion that characterized the French collaboration with the country's Nazi conquerors.

What is often overlooked about France in the 1940's, however, is that the anti-Semitic measures occurred only because the anti-democratic party—whose supporters ranged from Germanophobe monarchists like the writer and poet Charles Maurras to intellectual Teutonophiles and Nazi sympathizers like the writer Robert Brasillach—had been imposed on the country by German arms; and while crimes were being committed against the Jews, Jews were also being saved. As Claude Lanzmann, the author of the film *Shoah*, noted following the Carpentras affair in May: "Despite the collaboration, despite Vichy, two-thirds of the Jews of France were saved. And that is thanks to the French." But Lanzmann also expressed concern over the fact that some people still do not realize that anti-Semitism is a crime, not an opinion.

Actually, anti-Semitism has been *legally* a crime in France since 1972, and just recently there has also been an attempt (which failed) to criminalize the view that the Holocaust never occurred. Lanzmann happens to think that such legislation is dangerous in a variety of ways, and that the weapons of choice now must be education and information (including films like his own). He may well be right: the laws have hardly affected the rate or quantity of anti-Semitic expression. Le Pen himself has been taken to court several times, has lost several times, and has at least two more court dates ahead of him. In late May he was found guilty and fined for his remark that the Holocaust was a "detail" (in the sense of a minor circumstance) of World War II; he is likely to appeal. A couple of years ago, he was also found guilty of incitement to hatred for specifically naming three prominent Jewish journalists as evidence that the press is against him and is controlled by his (Jewish) enemies. Yet none of this deterred him from referring, just before Carpentras, to the "good representation" of Jews in the media.

Nor does it appear that his party's fortunes have ebbed under the prosecutorial offensive. Although the FN has only one deputy in the National Assembly, it has several hundred municipal and regional councillors scattered around France, and these sometimes represent the balance of local power. There are also 10 FN men in the European Parliament at Strasbourg, in a French delegation of 81.

Within the Le-Penist coalition of disaffected voters, a hard core is made up of people unhappy that it was de Gaulle, rather than Pétain, who turned out to be right in the 1940's—right about the outcome of the war, of course, but also right about France. Others who were Gaullists then (as Le Pen has claimed of himself) still have not digested the loss of French Algeria. Still others long for the sort of pre-Vatican II Catholicism that the French Church has turned its back on. And finally there are those (by no means coming only from the Right) who vote for Le Pen's party because they think it is the only one which addresses issues, such as immigration and security, that concern them.

How much these different circles of followers, whose common denominator is frustration, can be

* There are in France a little under a million Jews, in a population of over 55 million. They are in their large majority of North African origin, having arrived in France in 1962 at the end of the Algerian war.

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contaminated by the anti-Semitism of some simply cannot be predicted.* But the archaic, or local, nature of the recent anti-Semitic *affaires* suggests that the contamination may not go far.

CONSIDER the case of Claude Autant-Lara.

Autant-Lara is an acerbic old man who in the 1940's was a successful film-maker, one of the leaders of what was called the *Qualité française* style. Although he did not enjoy German patronage and was never thought of as a Germanophile, he was later attacked mercilessly by the *Nouvelle Vague* group of critics and directors, led by François Truffaut, and he never forgave them. In his mind, disappointments going back to the 1930's in Hollywood became confused with the eclipse of what had been a powerful film career in France, and accordingly the intellectuals in Paris and the Jews in Hollywood became his favorite scapegoats. These sentiments landed him a place on the Europarliamentary ticket of the FN and then a seat in Strasbourg.

Shortly after he took that seat, someone from the new Jewish magazine *Globe* got on the phone to the eighty-eight-year-old Autant-Lara and started pumping him. Autant-Lara asserted that there was a Jewish conspiracy against him, against France, and against the French film industry; moreover, he said, although he was not sure about the Holocaust, he did know that whatever the Nazis may have done, they did not get "the Veil woman" (*ils ont raté la mère Veil*), referring to Simone Veil, an Auschwitz survivor who has become one of the most popular politicians in France.

The Ministry of Justice initiated a suit against Autant-Lara for incitement to racial hatred. Every politician in France came out with statements condemning him. Even Jean-Marie Le Pen, who had put Autant-Lara on his ticket for a reason, felt compelled to express disapproval. Faced with all this, Autant-Lara resigned from the Europarliament and is presently facing prosecution for his interview with *Globe*.

More recently there was the Médecin affair in Nice, epitome of the French Riviera (bright sun and blue skies, mountains just behind the yellow and white beaches, elegant linen outfits, wine, seafood, the beautiful and the rich on the seashore, real-estate men and other tycoons, movie stars, and bimbos). Jacques Médecin practically inherited Nice's city hall from his father in 1964, and from the Center-Left he has moved to the Center-Right; until lately he was a member of RPR, the Gaullist party of Jacques Chirac.

Now, it is important to understand about Médecin that he has been a strong supporter of Israel. He has twinned Nice with Netanya, he has denounced Arab terrorism, he has taken part in demonstrations against Arafat's visit to meet with Mitterrand, and has done many things of concrete use to Israel, not to mention to the Jewish community of Nice, approximately 25,000 souls of mostly North African background.

Médecin, in other words, is emphatically not an enemy of the Jews. And yet, thinking he could score a few cheap political points at a time when he was under attack by his Socialist opponents for a variety of alleged financial irregularities, he publicly welcomed the *Front National* when it had its party congress in Nice not long before Carpentras and, as mentioned earlier, made a derogatory statement about Jews. The response of RPR, his own party, was to denounce Médecin, who in turn lost little time in resigning.

Again, as with Autant-Lara, the anti-Jewish virus was localized and quarantined.

IF the anti-Semitism of an Autant-Lara (for all the echo it finds in the extreme right-wing press) represents nothing but a spent, or almost spent, tradition, and if the alleged anti-Semitism of a Jacques Médecin is, on closer inspection, nothing but a political gesture, albeit a shameful one, then what is the political significance of these "affairs," of which so much has been made in France?

For one thing, the Left in France has been using the rhetoric of "anti-racism" to give itself a moral agenda and place the mainstream Right on the defensive. Up to now, moreover, this tactic has been successful. At Carpentras, the Minister of the Interior (who has responsibilities comparable to our Attorney General) virtually accused Le Pen of being responsible for the outrage. Then, as if such blatant politicization of a criminal affair were not sufficient, the Interior Ministry proceeded thoroughly to botch the Carpentras investigation. Not only was evidence lost, but it developed that the desecration, undoubtedly disgusting, was not quite so gross in its physical details as the Minister (and his government colleagues) had at first let on. Whether they themselves had been deceived by misleading reports, or whether they were unable to resist an opportunity to make a public show of moral indignation, will probably never be known. What is known is that there is no extremist group in France, particularly on the far Right, that remains closed to the police, and if any such group had been implicated the fact would have emerged quickly. As Salomon Malka, a radio journalist, was forced to conclude, "We feel we've been cuckolded. I hope it's not worse than that. But the crime certainly was manipulated for political ends."

Beyond the calculations of domestic politics, public displays of "anti-anti-Semitism" in France, as the historian Annie Kriegel has noted, serve another purpose: "covering" a government foreign policy that is not well disposed toward Israel, and indeed has not been well disposed ever since the Six-Day War of 1967. (If anything, Mitterrand has been rather more sympathetic, at least at the level of ges-

* One of the more famous members of the *Front National*, for example, is Pierre Sergent, who is a municipal councillor at Perpignan, a city in the southwest. He was a leader of the OAS, the violent irredentist movement that tried to sabotage Algerian independence, and was later amnestied after years in hiding. But the relevant point about him in this context is that he chose to wear a yellow star in 1942 (when he was still in high school) before joining the Resistance. Sergent believes that so long as he is in the FN, the anti-Semites cannot gain the upper hand in the party.

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tures, than his predecessors.) Thus, just after Carpentras, the French government sent its human-rights man, Bernard Kouchner, to Israel to complain about its treatment of Arabs.

FINALLY, and perhaps most importantly, the intellectuals in France (broadly speaking), despite their ritual "anti-anti-Semitism," have permitted a public discourse to develop in which anti-Semitism nevertheless is a factor. Today, "certain things" can be said in France about the Jews that could not have been said twenty, let alone thirty or forty, years ago; and though these "certain things" are ritually denounced, they are seldom rebutted. What has happened in the intellectual world is that sentimental indignation often has taken the place of serious combat.

It is important to remember, moreover, that although today the main academic or would-be academic deniers of the Holocaust in France are in the orbit of the *Front National*, the late Robert Faurisson, the "dean" of the French Holocaust-deniers, was first represented by an extreme-Left publisher; and even today, a revisionist tract was recently published in an organ of the prestigious CNRS, France's major state-funded graduate-research institute (it caused an uproar).

The shifting attitudes of the French Left to Israel play an important role here. It was *Libération*, the same paper that ran the headline "Outrage" after Carpentras, that in 1976 greeted Israel's lifesaving raid on Entebbe with the headline, "Israel, Champion Terrorist." The paper would almost certainly not do this today—after repeated demonstrations of the way Israel's enemies behave, the French media have acquired a certain respect for that country's security requirements. Yet the often virulently anti-Israel view which prevailed on the Left between the end of the Six-Day War and the withdrawal from Lebanon did make it easier to raise other "questions" about the Jewish people, past and present, and the poison of that earlier view still lingers in the air. No wonder, then, that French intellectuals, whose delicate consciences only yesterday were hurt by Israel's insistence on defending itself, today often lack the lucidity needed to mount an effective argument in behalf of Israel in particular, and the Jewish people in general, and instead wander perplexedly about in what the historian François Furet has justly called the "desert of anti-racism."

So there is an atmosphere in France—a tone, if you will—which, although hardly responsible for events like Carpentras, is very much part of the explanatory context in which such events take place.

Yet in the end it would be wrong to exaggerate on this score, too. The novelist Marek Halter, who lived through World War II in Poland and Russia and has witnessed the war against the Jews from Argentina to the borders of Israel, dismisses the notion that there is a serious threat in France of a social movement based on anti-Semitism. Referring to France as "one of the most beautiful democracies in the world, with a political class which, whatever else one might say of it, is one of the most generous," Halter adds that it is now home to "a Jewish community which has never lived so freely throughout its two-thousand-year presence in this country."

It does not do, ever, to underestimate the political potential of anti-Semitism in society. Yet despite the understandable alarm of Jews like Jean Kahn of CRIF, on balance Marek Halter's seems a fair judgment about today's France, even taking Le Pen into account, and even after the anxiety aroused by Carpentras.

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Up from Socialism

ISRAEL'S DILEMMA: WHY ISRAEL IS FALLING APART AND HOW TO PUT IT BACK TOGETHER. By EZRA SOHAR. *Shapolsky Publishers. 264 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by IRWIN M. STELZER

START with government ownership or effective control of the bulk of the manufacturing, agricultural, and financial sectors, themselves saturated with monopoly enterprises. Add a tax system that stifles initiative and virtually mandates cheating. Stir in a method of wage-setting that is supposed to be egalitarian (bad enough!) but, thanks to a bewildering variety of tax-free "perks" and special exemptions, is not. Overlay all of this with a huge bureaucracy and give it the discretion to allocate land, water, and housing; to determine who shall be permitted to obtain foreign currency, and at what exchange rate; and to decide who will be preferred for most jobs. You have here, in short, a prescription for an ossified, inefficient, bankrupt economy. You have Israel.

Or at least you have the Israel seen by Ezra Sohar, a physician and social commentator whose book is somewhere between an eye-opening catalogue of the dash for economic ruin by successive Israeli governments and the agonized cry of a patriot outraged by "the yawning chasm between the awesome potential and the feeble reality of modern Israel."

Israel's economic woes, argues Sohar, have their roots in the socialist ideology of its founders. At the turn of the century, "persuaded by the sheer force of Russian anti-Semitism that their contributions to socialism would have to be made elsewhere," thousands of Eastern European Jews selected Palestine as "their experiment station." In 1920 these young socialists established the Jewish Labor Federation (Histadrut), and within a decade they had become "the dominant force in the economic . . . life of Palestine Jewry." Histadrut came to control agricultural settlements, manufacturing plants, a bank, the all-important sick fund (health-care apparatus), hotels, theaters, and schools, among other things. The founders of this economic monolith were no shrinking violets: when some agricultural settlers objected to Histadrut's takeover of their communities, they were brushed aside by the likes of David Ben-Gurion, who showed true revolutionary steel—the same quality that would stand Palestine's Jews in good stead against the British and the Arabs—by declaring that "our movement's economic unity cannot depend on moral convictions alone. Legal authority is needed to coerce traitors."

When the British Mandate ended in 1948, ownership and/or control of most economic units by the new state seemed quite the natural thing to Histadrut's socialist cadres. The Israel Land Authority was set up, and was granted ownership of 93 percent of Israel's land; the electric, water, and transport facilities passed from the Mandate authorities to the new government; some 200 government corporations were formed, many of them monopolies; immigrants were assigned by central authorities to certain specified geographical areas; a web of rules and regulations was spun, requiring licenses and permits for almost any form of economic activity; and a system of subsidies was established, often arbitrarily determined by Israel's apparatchiks, with political pull rather than profits being the force that determined whether or not a business would survive. According to Sohar, the Jewish state became the embodiment of "the most rigid socialist ideology in the Western world."

The result of all of this is by now familiar: soaring inflation, high tariffs to protect inefficient industries, massive government deficits, repeated currency devaluations, a huge bureaucracy (by Sohar's reckoning, some two-thirds of Israel's wage-earners are employed directly or indirectly by the government or Histadrut), and a low standard of living for those unable to participate in the black economy or gain government favors through "*protektzia*," or pull.

To Israeli politicians who attribute this sorry state of affairs to their nation's defense burden, Sohar has an answer: nonsense. In what is perhaps the most interesting section of the book, he contends that before the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel spent no larger a portion of its resources on defense than did America. "This alone refutes the establishment's claim that Israel's pre-1967 economic difficulties resulted from the heavy 'defense burden.'" As for the doubling of defense expenditures after the Six-Day War, and their further increase after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, these are dismissed by Sohar on several grounds.

First, when American economic aid is taken into account, even current levels of defense expenditure—by Sohar's reckoning, 8 percent of GNP after deducting net American aid of $3 billion and another $0.5 billion from Diaspora Jewry—should be manageable. Second, the relatively high level of this figure is itself a consequence of the socialist inefficiencies that pervade the military-supply industries. Third, Israel's defense burden is magnified by the fact that Menachem Begin foolishly insisted on receiving American aid in the form of loans rather than grants; this, Sohar argues, failed to recognize that "in the Israel-U.S. military relationship, the U.S. comes off best" since it does not have to maintain its own forces in the Middle East, it obtains information about Soviet arms, and it has a place to combat-test its own weapons. Finally, So-

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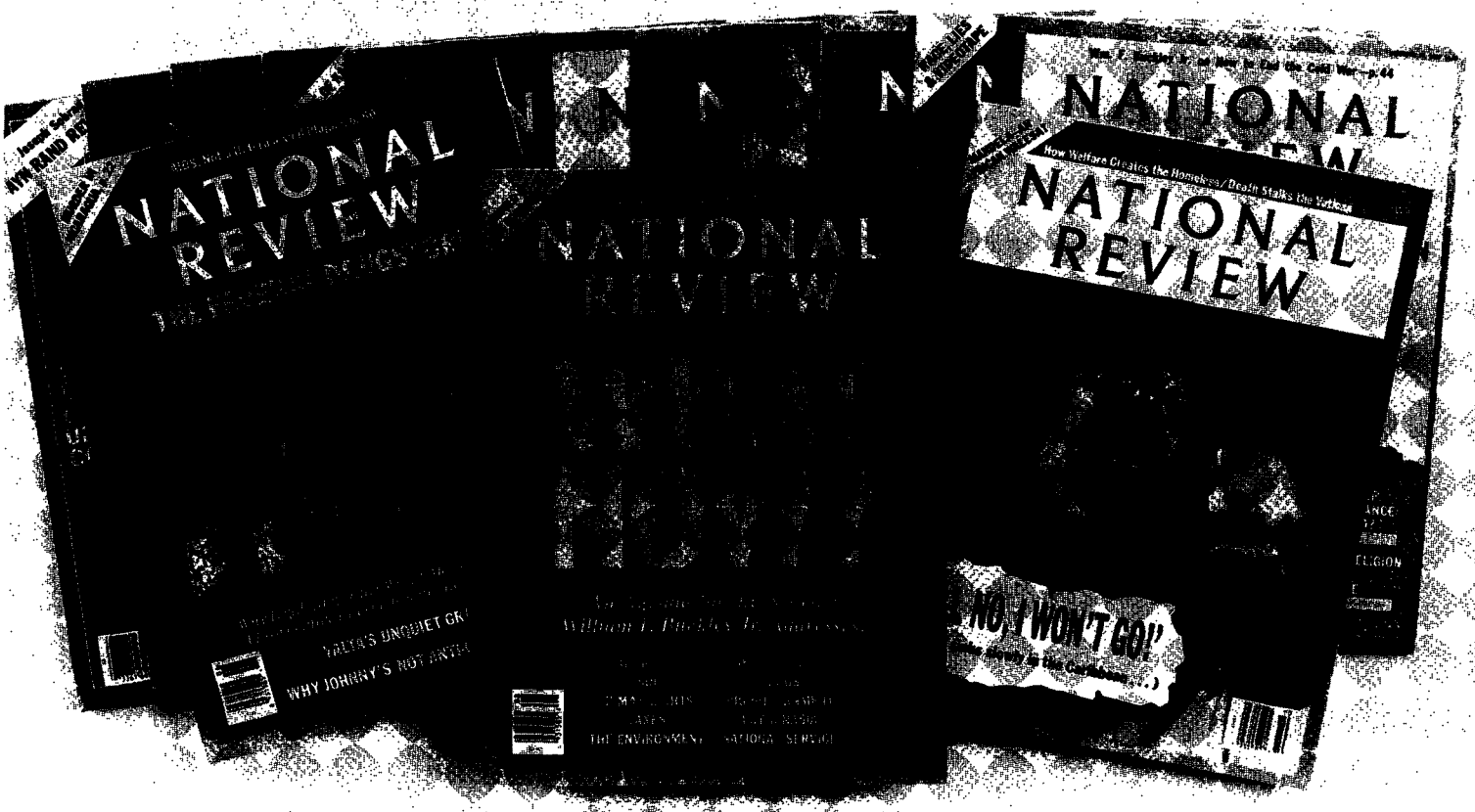

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har contends that Israel could afford its own defense if its "socialist, centralized regime" would stop squandering money on silly projects (like paying $7 billion to shareholders injured by Israel's banking crisis).

Actually, I suspect that the true cost of Israel's fight to survive in a hostile environment will never be tallied fully. One can estimate the value of hours lost to military service, but not the cost of disruption of normal work and manning procedures. Or the cost of developing, alone, resources more efficiently exploited in concert with neighbors. Or the cost of ruinous taxes on motor vehicles, made necessary in part by the lack of access to neighbors' oil. Israel's geopolitical isolation; its need to elect tough, unbending leaders; its dependency on foreign aid—all are costs, however intangible, imposed on it by neighbors who would destroy it. More important, it seems an exaggeration to treat all American and world Jewish aid as offsets to the military budget, on the assumption that such assistance would stop completely if peace broke out in the Middle East. Some would certainly continue, and would constitute a net inflow available for non-defense purposes.

SOHAR's tendency to overreach by minimizing Israel's defense costs is but one flaw in his polemic. Another is his almost exclusive reliance on newspaper clippings for his presentation of the facts. Israel's highly competitive press lovingly gathers and gleefully reports stories of government inefficiency; stringing them together into a book is not a sure route to accuracy.

Another failing is Sohar's indiscriminate attribution of *all* of Israel's ills to socialism. This is taken to sometimes absurd lengths. "All over the world, obtaining a driver's license is a simple matter," reports Sohar, bemoaning the long lines and the fact that in Israel, "Tension rides high throughout the whole affair." New Yorkers, no strangers to long lines at the Department of Motor Vehicles, will be amused. So, too, with health care: Israel shares with capitalist countries an inability to organize the delivery of such services in an efficient and humane manner. Socialism may contribute to the problem, but it is hardly the sole cause of long waits for hospital beds, poor use of testing facilities, or the failure to contrive efficient methods to care for long-term patients.

Sohar's subtitle is also somewhat misleading. He does indeed show "Why Israel Is Falling Apart," but there is hardly a word here about "How to Put It Back Together." Other than calling in the most general terms for tax cuts and privatization, and urging Israelis to "tell their government to get off their backs," Sohar has little by way of prescription. Perhaps he views the cure as self-evident. But the failure of past reforms, and the difficulties faced by other countries in extricating themselves from the swamp of post-World War II socialist policies, suggest that there is no easy answer.

Strangely, the difficulty may be exacerbated by Israel's robust democracy. Sohar points out that Israel is "unique [in] combining . . . democracy, including freedom of speech and suffrage, and total government control of the economy." It is, he says, "the world's only democratically ruled centralized economy." This may be a bit of an overstatement: Sweden's sinking economy comes to mind. But it is a fact worth pondering when considering whether or not this small, beleaguered nation can change its ways.

In Eastern Europe over the past year, underpaid workers, overworked professionals, and politically repressed intellectuals finally had enough, and took to the streets at the first sign of Soviet inability or unwillingness to use force to stop them. Israelis, instead, take to the ballot box. But their choice has been between the Tweedledum of a Labor party overtly committed to socialism and the Tweedledee of a Likud equally if covertly committed to perpetuating centralized control of the economy. True, Israelis can not only vote, they can complain in their free press and in books such as this one. But their system paradoxically seems more impervious to fundamental change than any in Eastern Europe, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union. Perhaps the democratic safety valve is releasing a bit too much steam for Israel's long-term good.

And the inability to change its economic structure *is* Israel's greatest danger. For the inefficiencies that Sohar so graphically describes may have passed from the merely maddening to the truly unsustainable. The new wave of Soviet immigration will, initially at least, require massive additional spending. Unless existing waste can be reduced, this will mean more borrowing, more inflation, further currency devaluation—and this at a time when American willingness to help has been sapped by media coverage of the *intifada*, some well-aimed shots by Israel at its own foot, and the Baker-Dole drive to reduce aid. Sohar is right: "a complete overhaul" is urgently needed. So far, it does not seem very likely.

Apocalypse Now

THE END OF NATURE. By BILL MCKIBBEN. *Random House. 226 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JOEL SCHWARTZ

THE huge amount of media attention lavished upon this year's celebration of Earth Day was foreshadowed in the earlier enthusiastic reception accorded Bill McKibben's environmentalist tract, *The End of Nature*. Deeply flawed as it is, McKibben's book is also the latest incarnation of what Edith Efron has called apocalyptic environmentalism, an impulse in which "spurious knowledge is . . . used to rationalize [the] expectation of catastrophe."

The discourse of apocalyptics is generally overwrought and hysterical. In this limited sense McKibben, a young staff writer for the *New Yorker*, offers something of an exception to the rule. *The End of Nature* is in part a lyrical evocation of the joys of unspoiled nature, and only in part a jeremiad directed against mankind for despoiling the

JOEL SCHWARTZ, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *is executive editor of the* Public Interest.

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environment and endangering the lives of many species (our own included). McKibben writes, moreover, in a graceful and informal style. Yet his chief aim is clearly to frighten us with what he regards as the likely consequences of ozone depletion, acid rain, and—in particular—the greenhouse effect.

McKibben's book has been successful largely because of its alarmism. For this reason, it warrants comparison with another work by a *New Yorker* writer that made a tremendous splash less than a decade ago but is now quite deservedly forgotten: Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*. McKibben himself invites the comparison, referring to Schell's plea for nuclear disarmament and noting that the "invention of nuclear weapons may actually have marked the beginning of the end of nature: we possessed, finally, the capacity to overmaster nature, to leave an indelible imprint everywhere all at once." Schell can even be said to have anticipated McKibben's argument in his observation that nature, "once a harsh and feared master, now lies in subjection, and needs protection against man's powers," and in warning specifically against "the peril of gradual pollution of the natural environment—by, for example, global heating through an increased 'greenhouse effect.' "

Schell took elaborate pains in advancing a thesis that was never particularly controversial—namely, that full-scale nuclear warfare would be profoundly undesirable—and in propounding radical and simple-minded proposals for averting holocaust. Our "task," he proclaimed, "is nothing less than to reinvent politics: to reinvent the world." Ignoring the huge and obvious differences between totalitarian and democratic societies, Schell naively advocated the creation of a world government to guarantee peace: "Our present system and the institutions that make it up are the debris of history. They have become inimical to life, and must be swept away."

With the benefit of not very much hindsight, Schell's fears today seem quite hysterical, his proposed solution altogether irrelevant. Nor is hindsight really necessary. Schell's argument rested on the assertion, borrowed from Bertrand Russell, that "unless we rid ourselves of our nuclear weapons a holocaust not only *might* occur but *will* occur." Russell's assertion had been refuted a generation earlier by Raymond Aron: "For the *risk* of a war that *might be* the suicide of all belligerents," wrote Aron, Russell and those who thought like him "substitute the certainty of such a war." And if nuclear war was less than likely in the late 40's and early 50's, by the late 70's and early 80's its prospects were much more remote still—which may be one reason for the hysterical tone of Schell's doomsday scenarios.

For his part, McKibben can be said to share Schell's proclivities; like

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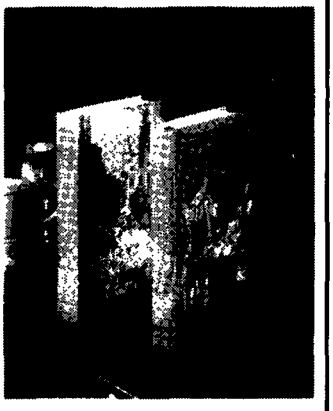

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Schell, he asks us to treat a remote possibility as an effectual certainty. Thus McKibben asserts baldly that "the scientists agree that we have already pumped enough [carbon dioxide] into the air so that a significant rise in temperature and a subsequent shift in weather are inevitable." In fact, however, there is nothing like a scientific consensus on this issue. Leading meteorologists like Richard Lindzen of MIT and statisticians like Andrew Solow of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution deny that a significant temperature rise is likely. Increases in the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide over the past century, they note, have failed to result in discernibly higher average temperatures. Similarly, a 1989 Marshall Institute report—"Scientific Perspectives on the Greenhouse Problem"—concludes that "current forecasts of global warming for the 21st century are so inaccurate and fraught with uncertainty as to be useless to policy-makers." And according to a recent study in *Science*, ten years of temperature measurements by weather satellites have failed to find *any* evidence of global warming.

It is not even clear that global warming would be altogether undesirable if it were to occur; moderate temperature increases would certainly make some places less habitable, but they would also make other, chillier places more habitable. Whereas McKibben hypothesizes that as a result of global warming American food exports "might fall by 70 percent," a study just published in *Nature* suggests that American farmers would gain $3.5 billion in annual revenues (and that America would have no problem feeding itself) even in the face of huge temperature increases of as much as ten degrees Fahrenheit. But no such considerations are allowed to qualify McKibben's unassailable belief that the end is nigh.

If McKibben and Schell share the apocalyptic temper, however, it is also true that no two apocalyptics are exactly alike. Indeed, in this case the differences happen to be of some interest. Of the two, McKibben emerges in some ways as by far the more radical.

Consider the passage from *The Fate of the Earth* (quoted by McKibben) where Schell argues that nuclear peril "should be seen at the very center of the ecological crisis." Schell justifies this position as follows:

> Both the effort to preserve the environment and the effort to save the species from extinction would be enriched and strengthened by this recognition. The nuclear question . . . would gain a context, and the ecological movement, which, in its concern for plants and animals, at times assumes an almost misanthropic posture, as though men were an unwanted intruder in an otherwise unblemished natural world, would gain the humanistic intent that should stand at the heart of its concern.

Now, the "humanistic intent" Schell calls for here is precisely what is missing from McKibben's book. *The End of Nature* deplores man's interactions with nature, past and present, and attacks our dominion over nature in terms like these:

> We sit astride the world like some military dictator, some smelly Papa Doc—we are able to wreak violence with great efficiency and to destroy all that is good and worthwhile, but not to exercise power to any real end.

In his opposition to man's interference with nature, McKibben is a sort of fellow traveler of the "deep-ecology" movement. Deep ecologists accord to nature an ethical status at least equaling that of humans. They reject the anthropocentric (or "shallow") ecological position which accepts human primacy over nature, and which seeks merely to make us better stewards of our environment. Their contrasting standpoint is well illustrated by Rutgers ecologist David Ehrenfeld, who wrote in 1978 to oppose medicine's elimination of the smallpox virus. In Ehrenfeld's view, it was wrong to discriminate in this way against a small virus whose only function is to prey on human beings. McKibben for his part asserts that efforts by geneticists to increase harvests and to weatherproof them are "awful"—an assertion not calculated to persuade the millions of poor people who today experience not the abundance but the penury of nature.

As against the prudential conservationist position which recognizes the obvious goods that accrue to us through the continued existence and expansion of wilderness areas and other natural preserves, while seeking at the same time to channel natural forces for the benefit of man, McKibben reports quite sympathetically on the deep-ecological views of the likes of Dave Foreman, a leader of the radical environmentalist group, Earth First!, who has said that "the industrial empire [is] a cancer on the earth." Acting to root out that malignancy, Foreman was arrested last year for conspiring to cut down power lines. McKibben says nothing to condemn Earth First! for its general policy of "monkey wrenching"—violating the law (and, if need be, endangering human life) to sabotage the development of natural resources.

But then the basic moral and political premise of deep ecologists—that nature, like people, has rights—does not easily square with the notion of law, or indeed with the notion that government is legitimized by the consent of the governed. The difficulty is that only people—not trees and rivers—can vote, choose representatives, make their preferences known. And that is precisely why self-appointed representatives of nature like Foreman reject the relevance of popular consent; to them, representative democracy is unacceptably "anthropocentric." Much to be preferred is the muteness of nature, whose "rights" can only be represented by those presuming to speak on its behalf.

In *The Fate of the Earth* Jonathan Schell wrote that one of the problems with the doctrine of nuclear deterrence was that it "is limited to living people—it leaves out of account the helpless, speechless unborn." He invoked the need "to cherish the lives of the unborn. . . . Instead of being asked not to kill our neighbors, we are asked to let them be born." Though one would be hard put to imagine

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Schell as a right-to-lifer, his *bien pensant* politics were quite compatible with a pronounced sympathy for the unborn of the species.

McKibben, by contrast, is attracted to the politics of zero—or, more precisely, negative—population growth. He suggests that human reproduction today is irresponsible. He and his wife, for example, want to have a child, but this is a longing that ought really to be overcome: "When the problem was that someone might drop the Bomb, it perhaps made sense to bear and raise sane, well-adjusted children in the hope that they'd help prevent the Bomb from being dropped. But the problem now is precisely too many children, well adjusted or otherwise." More remarkably still, McKibben blandly reports "some deep ecologists" as saying that the world's human population "shouldn't exceed a hundred million." Thus, in McKibben's alarmist tract, the virtual disappearance of the world's population—the very catastrophe Jonathan Schell wrote *his* alarmist tract to avert—emerges as an almost desirable outcome.

The rhetoric of love for mankind that underlay Jonathan Schell's brand of nuclear apocalyptics was often overblown and empty-headed ("Let us love one another—in the present and across the divides of death and birth"). But for all of that, it was preferable to the callous and cold-blooded contempt for humanity characteristic even of so seemingly affable an environmental apocalyptic as Bill McKibben.

Henry & Mr Bones

DREAM SONG: THE LIFE OF JOHN BERRYMAN. By PAUL MARIANI. *Morrow. 519 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT RICHMAN

THE American poet John Berryman (1914-72) liked to excuse his excessive drinking and argumentative, sometimes violent nature by reminding himself that he was a genius and a poet. Paul Mariani, in his fine biography, does not absolve Berryman of responsibility for his conduct, which involved a lot more than colossal benders and the occasional fit of rage: Berryman routinely abused and neglected his wives and children, betrayed friends, demanded special treatment from university colleagues, and womanized as if there were no tomorrow. Nor does Mariani attempt to apologize for Berryman's suicide in 1972, when the poet was fifty-seven. Although this book reveals some of the reasons for Berryman's agony, Mariani does not, in the manner of some biographers of "Romantic" figures, either justify objectionable acts or deduce from them an index to the quality of the poetry that Berryman wrote.

BORN John Allyn Smith, Jr., on October 25, 1914, in McAlester, Oklahoma, Berryman was the first child of Martha Shaver and John Allyn Smith, Sr., a Minnesota native who worked as a bank officer. After losing a series of jobs in Oklahoma, Smith moved his family to Tampa, Florida, where they ran a restaurant, and then to Clearwater, into an apartment building owned by a wealthy bond salesman named John Angus McAlpin Berryman. Soon Martha was sleeping with her landlord. Smith retaliated with an affair of his own. When his mistress left him, Smith threatened suicide. Martha filed for divorce, accusing him of adultery. A few weeks later, Smith was found dead outside the apartment with a bullet wound in his chest and a .32 lying near his head. Weeks later, "unwilling to have her children remain fatherless," Martha married John Berryman in New York City and changed her name to Jill Angel. Her son's name became John Allyn McAlpin Berryman.

His mother's inconstancy and the taking of new names would

ROBERT RICHMAN *is poetry editor of the* New Criterion. *His article, "Reclaiming Yeats," appeared in our December 1989 issue.*

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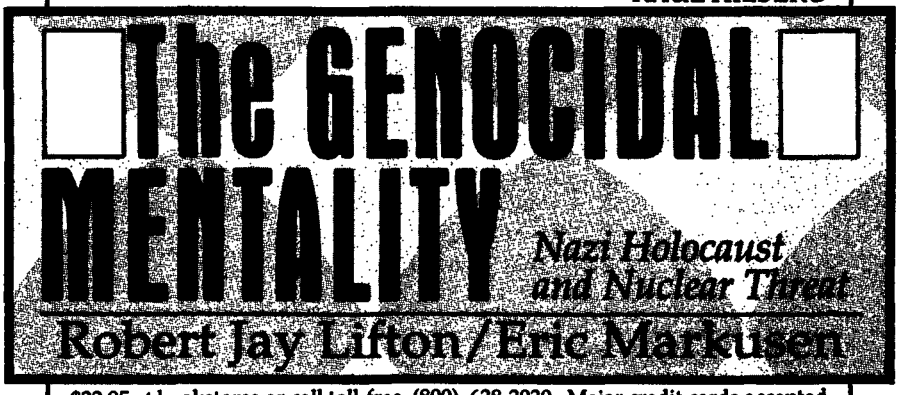

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haunt Berryman for years. But nothing tormented him so much as his father's suicide: "O journeyer, deaf in the mould," he wrote in *The Dream Songs* (1969), the long poem that is his major work, "insane/with violent travel & death: consider me/in my cast, your first son." Years later, after Berryman had all but lost the ability to write so well, he was still fixated on his father: "Reflexions on suicide, & on my father, possess me," he wrote in *Love and Fame* (1971), published one year before he ended these enervating reflections for good.*

Berryman's mother and stepfather sent him to the academically superior and "proper" South Kent School in Connecticut, and from there he entered Columbia College in 1932, where, an awkward and sensitive boy determined not to be an oddball, he learned the name of every freshman, ran track, and rowed crew. He also read much contemporary poetry, including Muriel Rukeyser and the "amazing" Hart Crane. Despite a no more than respectable academic record—Berryman spent most of his time cultivating an image as, in his words, "the goddamest woman-thief on the campus"—he was awarded the prestigious Kellett Fellowship for two years' study at Cambridge. There he rejected the chaotic influence of Crane and embraced instead Yeats's more objective and disciplined vision. He even sent a poem to Yeats. When Yeats responded, Berryman was stunned.

Returning to the U.S. in 1938, Berryman took a series of teaching jobs—at Wayne State, Harvard, and Princeton—and began to experience bouts of severe depression. In 1947 he recorded his infidelity to his wife Eileen, whom he had married in 1942, in a sonnet sequence that he would suppress until 1967, when it appeared as *Berryman's Sonnets*. (In the *Collected Poems* it has been renamed *Sonnets to Chris*.) Here began Berryman's attempts to use poetry to placate the guilt brought on by his behavior. Though there is much lovely celebration in these sonnets—"Great citadels whereon the gold sun falls/ Miss you O Chris sequestered to the west"—there is also much about the "disgrace" and "cold rewards" of the affair, and about the "grand evasion" of his life. "Scars of these months blazon like a decree," writes Berryman in one sonnet; in another, he dreams of death—the only way, it seems, of silencing a lying heart: "I am dreaming on the hour when I can hear/My last lie rattle, and then lie truly still."

In 1948 there appeared Berryman's first book of poems, *The Dispossessed*. Many of the poems in this volume also focus, albeit vaguely, on the question of whether there is any hope for "repine blackmarket felons" like himself. In "The Possessed," he counsels such "criminals" to

> Think on your sins with all intensity.
> The men are on the stair, they will not wait.
> There is a paper-knife to penetrate
> Heart and guilt together. Do it quickly.

It is hard, in fact, to imagine someone more deeply infected with a sense of guilt than John Berryman. An incident from those early days illustrates the point. One evening in the summer of 1941, Berryman, then living in New York, stopped to listen to a sidewalk haranguer who was arguing over the question of U.S. involvement in the war. Berryman began debating with him. At once the man stopped, pointed, and called him a Jew. Berryman protested, said there must be some mistake: he was no Jew. "You look like a Jew, you talk like a Jew, you are a Jew!" the man shouted, before demanding that Berryman recite the Apostles' Creed to prove him wrong. Berryman, failing to remember the Creed, ran off, trembling with rage but also with a sense of inexplicable, groundless blame. This incident forms the basis of his famous story, "The Imaginary Jew."

Berryman's next book, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* (1953), is, like *Sonnets to Chris*, a group of poems about a purloined mistress. In this case, however, the object of devotion is the American colonial poet Anne Bradstreet, dead for 300 years. For Berryman, a man with a history of craving and hurting women, the decision to choose an untouchable and therefore unbetrayable woman was only sensible. "I have earned the right to be alone with you," he says to his pretend-lover, though his intentions nonetheless provoke feelings of culpability, both in him and in her, his surrogate. While working on *Bradstreet*, Mariani tells us, Berryman kept vivid in his mind the "example of Hawthorne's Reverend Dimmesdale [in *The Scarlet Letter*], with his public confession to the community against which he has sinned." This was how Berryman was beginning to view his poems: as confessions of disobedience followed by humble solicitations of forgiveness from an insulted citizenry.

In late 1954, after a disastrous stint at the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, Berryman got a job at the University of Minnesota. Arriving in Minneapolis, he began analyzing his dreams (in one, he hacked up women's bodies and hid the pieces under houses) and reading consoling literature. His tastes in poetry were also changing during this period. "I am down on Rilke and the hieratic boys just now," he wrote; "I don't deny his sensitivity and his marvelous melody," but Rilke was too cut off from his emotions. Berryman himself now wished "to get down into the arena [of life] and kick around." The mixture of dream-analysis, study of redemptive literature, and a wish to "kick around" in real life resulted in the first of the Dream Songs.

This sequence of autobiographical poems occupied him for fifteen years. And they *are* autobiographical, even though the one-volume edition of the work is prefaced by a note in which Berryman insists that

> the poem, . . . whatever its wide cast of characters, is essentially

* *Love and Fame*, along with *The Dispossessed* (1948), *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* (1953), *Berryman's Sonnets* (1967), and *Delusions, etc.* (1972), have now been gathered in *John Berryman: Collected Poems 1937-1971*, edited by Charles Thornbury, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 348 pp., $25.00. Despite the title, the book omits *The Dream Songs*.

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about an imaginary character (not the poet, not me) named Henry, a white American in early middle age sometimes in blackface, who has suffered an irreversible loss and talks about himself sometimes in the first person, sometimes in the third, sometimes even in the second; he has a friend, never named, who addresses him as Mr Bones. . . .

The "irreversible loss," of course, is his father's death, a monumental event invoked straightaway in Dream Song 1:

All the world like a woolen lover
once did seem on Henry's side.
Then came a departure.
Thereafter nothing fell out as it might or ought.
I don't see how Henry, pried open for all the world to see, survived.

THE enormous emotional cost of this "departure" comprises the often bleak subject-matter of *The Dream Songs*, an effort to achieve, through poetry, the salvation of a truly repulsive sinner. To be sure, there are poems on neutral topics like Berryman's experiences in Ireland, elegies for Randall Jarrell and Delmore Schwartz, two poet-friends who died tragic deaths, and a poignant tribute to the "majestic Shade" of W.B. Yeats. Mainly, however, *The Dream Songs* divulge the "horde/of terrors fresh from Henry's shaming past," plus a hefty dose of anguish brought on by the attempt to wipe out this "horde of terrors" through nonstop drink and sex.

Pitiless and often difficult to take though Berryman's self-scrutiny is in *The Dream Songs*, there is also much humor here, and occasional intermissions for the voicing of tenderness and regret, as in the affirmation of enduring love—a kind Berryman would never know—in Dream Song 171:

Go, ill-sped book, and whisper to her or
storm out the message for her only ear
that she is beautiful.
Mention sunsets, be not silent of her eyes
and mouth and other prospects, praise her size,
say her figure is full.
Say her small figure is heavenly & full,
so as stunned Henry yatters like a fool
& maketh little sense.
Say she is soft in speech, stately in walking,
modest at gatherings, and in every thing
declare her excellence.

Forget not, when the rest is wholly done
and all her splendours opened one by one
to add that she likes Henry,
for reasons unknown, and fate has bound them fast
one to another in linkages that last
and that are fair to see.

The components of Berryman's formal genius are all here, and all crucial to the success of the poem: the flawless rhythms, the deft interpolation of dialect ("yatters like a fool") and poetic language ("maketh little sense"), and the slight syntactical distortions that were Berryman's trademark ("fate has bound them fast/one to another in linkages that last").

GOOD as some of Berryman's writing was in the late 50's and early 60's, and the more lucid his goals as a poet became, the more he unraveled. During his rocky, eleven-year marriage to Kate Donahue, his third wife, a great amount of time was spent in hospitals for alcoholism and nervous collapse. These were also years in which he received much praise for *77 Dream Songs* (1964), *Berryman's Sonnets* (1967), and the final Dream Songs installment, the Bollingen Award-winning *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest* (1968). In 1970, utterly overcome by his enslavement to sex and alcohol, Berryman, the Imaginary Jew, considered converting to the real Judaism. Instead, hard on the heels of another "sort of religious conversion," as he put it, he returned to the fold of Catholicism. But religion was no balm, either. Dismayed by his inability to stay dry—he had joined Alcoholics Anonymous in 1971—Berryman on the morning of January 7, 1972 climbed the railing of the Washington Avenue Bridge in Minneapolis, steadied himself for one last time, and pushed out.

THE work of Berryman's last years is uneven. The "mysterious late excellence" for which Berryman had praised William Carlos Williams in *The Dream Songs* was not to be his. Most of *Love and Fame*, notably the poems about his student days, is trite and carelessly composed. Only the eleven-poem sequence entitled "Eleven Addresses to the Lord," written in the wake of Berryman's supposed return to Catholicism, maintains the power to impress. Here Berryman returns to his favorite theme: the "flicker of impulse lust" and the ensuing scramble for penance:

Sole watchman of the flying stars, guard me
against my flicker of impulse lust: teach me
to see them as sisters & daughters. Sustain
my grand endeavors: husbanding and crafting.

Forsake me not when my wild hours come;
grant me sleep nightly, grace soften my dreams;
achieve in me patience till the thing be done,
a careful view of my achievement come.

The grand ambition of *The Dream Songs*—to make human a figure of the profoundest deprivation—animates these lines, too.

This ambition, it bears repeating, never involved the exculpation of the guilty one or the minimization of his crimes. Berryman's goal, to use language he himself applied to the character of Macbeth in a lecture delivered at Princeton in 1951, was to depict a moral transgressor "fully in alliance with the powers of darkness" and yet somehow "not lose the . . . reader's sympathy." On these grounds alone, his work should be distinguished from that of the other so-called "confessional" poets of the 60's—Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton—with whom he is often lumped. For these poets, the banalities of life starkly transcribed were sufficient for poetry; any larger, transforming aesthetic vision was taboo. Berryman, whose talent was,

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for the most part, greater than theirs, aimed to go farther.

MARIANI's biography is judicious, well-written, and eminently useful as a companion-volume to the poetry. One wishes one could be as cheering about the new *Collected Poems 1937-1971*. The book is very beautifully designed, but it is prefaced by forty pages of academic drivel by Charles Thornbury, a professor at St. John's University in Minnesota. Thornbury, we are told, is at work on a critical biography of the poet, but to judge by the quality of his insights here, readers of his forthcoming work should be prepared to salvage yet another poetic reputation from yet another mediocre academic's deathly grip.

Making a Difference

SMALL VICTORIES: THE REAL WORLD OF A TEACHER, HER STUDENTS, AND THEIR HIGH SCHOOL. By SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN. *Harper & Row. 431 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by JACKSON TOBY

SMALL VICTORIES is an account of a year spent by a former New York *Times* reporter observing Seward Park High School on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. A state task force on education described Seward Park in 1985 as one of "the ten worst high schools in New York State." Its dropout rate is high, and its students average exceedingly low scores on standardized reading tests. The reader might therefore expect that *Small Victories* would round up the usual suspects: violent students from the underclass sabotaging the educational process.

It does not. Teachers here are not afraid of their students and students are not afraid of one another. School safety, it turns out, is not a problem. Despite a high incidence of assaults and murders in the neighborhood *outside* Seward Park, the school itself is a safe place in which to learn. The worst violence Freedman observed during his year was a fight between two tough girls over a boy; one girl wounded the other's face with a box-cutter. Attacks on teachers or extortion of money and valuables from students, fixtures of many inner-city schools, do not characterize Seward Park.

Unlike violence, truancy and dropping-out *are* problems at Seward Park. Freedman tells of accompanying a street-wise fifty-five-year old black "school-neighborhood worker" named Dave Patterson as he makes his rounds looking for truants. He finds one of them, sixteen-year-old Darnell Reese, in the welfare hotel where he lives with his alcoholic mother. When cajoling has no impact on Darnell, Patterson threatens to report him to the welfare authorities. But he cannot save the youngster; the drug trade in the neighborhood around the school holds more attraction than a high-school education.

Actually, it might have been worse for the school had Darnell been persuaded to attend more often. As Freedman writes: "What diminishes violence in Seward Park is . . . an urban version of natural selection in which the most dangerous teenagers on the Lower East Side do not bother going to high school." This insight explains what is otherwise puzzling: how a place like Seward Park, which is compelled to accept any junior-high-school graduate not motivated to apply to one of the more selective city high schools, nevertheless can achieve "small victories."

Freedman's main theme concerns those victories, won in this case by a young teacher named Jessica Siegel. The daughter of a suburban physician, Miss Siegel devotes unremitting effort to teaching journalism to immigrant Chinese and Hispanic children. We see her not only in her classroom, but in such extracurricular roles as driving several of her students for admissions interviews at the State University of New York at New Paltz, or rallying sleepy student-

JACKSON TOBY, *professor of sociology and director of the Institute for Criminological Research at Rutgers University, is working on a book about school violence.*

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newspaper reporters at a 6:30 A.M. meeting. Her story has something of the appeal of a soap opera (in fact, Twentieth Century-Fox paid a six-figure price for a film option on *Small Victories*, and the Book-of-the-Month Club selected it for mass distribution), but Freedman aspires to more than this. He wants to illustrate how urban education *can* overcome handicaps, including multiple language problems and the severe culture shock of moving from peasant societies to New York.

In choosing to concentrate on Jessica Siegel and her senior-year journalism students, however, Freedman has painted a rosier picture of a big-city high school than would have emerged had he chosen to report on a more typical neighborhood school in New York, or on 9th-grade rather than 12th-grade classes. More than 40 percent of entering freshman at Seward Park drop out before graduating, which means that Miss Siegel's students are those who have determined to stay, who want at least to graduate from high school and perhaps even go on to college, not those who find school meaningless and are waiting until they reach sixteen so they can legally escape.

Having students receptive to education helps Jessica Siegel to be the creative, dynamic teacher she is. Dedicated teachers want to be at Seward Park—the turnover rate is quite low—because their students by and large harbor educational aspirations similar to those of the children of Jewish immigrants who attended Seward Park a half-century ago. Seward Park is lucky to be located within walking distance of Chinatown, and its Chinese students in particular are usually very diligent. They may not be the most academically able children in the area—these tend to prefer Brooklyn Tech or Stuyvesant—and their English may be poor, but fully 90 percent of Seward Park students who persevere until graduation go on to perfectly respectable colleges or universities, often with scholarships. Thus, Seward Park lives in a time warp; it is typical not of contemporary New York high schools but of New York high schools of a bygone era.

Parts of *Small Victories* are wonderful, especially the graphic accounts of Jessica Siegel's classroom. If proof were needed that good teaching is possible in inner-city schools, this book supplies it. But it is wrong to infer from Jessica Siegel's story, as Senator Bill Bradley is quoted as saying on the dust jacket, that a charismatic teacher can overcome "insurmountable odds." There is less of a lesson for urban education in *Small Victories* than meets Samuel Freedman's eye. True, good teachers and principals can make a difference. Yet after nine years of winning "small victories," Jessica Siegel, exhausted, finally quit teaching.

Remembrance

ONE, BY ONE, BY ONE: FACING THE HOLOCAUST. By JUDITH MILLER. *Simon & Schuster. 319 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by EWARD NORDEN

JUDITH MILLER, an editor at the New York *Times*, here looks at five countries where the Germans waged their war against the Jews, and at one, her own, where it was just a well-established rumor, in order to report how that episode is being dealt with today. She has discovered, to her dismay, that in Germany, Austria, Holland, France, and the USSR, the facts of the Holocaust are being cooked, that history is being mythologized for local consumption and political purposes. And in the United States, she describes a welter of museums and memorials, some vulgar, some dignified and useful.

To be sure, Miller awards each of her European countries a different grade. When it comes to facing the Holocaust, Austria flunks. Holland, France, and the USSR, though commended for some efforts, are faulted for self-serving distortions, evasions, and silences. West Germany comes off best. This is thanks to official statements of culpability, reparations to Israel and to individual Jews, commemorations, education, the didactic speeches of President Richard von Weizsäcker, some trials of war criminals, some historiography.

Even so, Miller has problems with West Germany. Craving normality and acceptance, tired of atoning for their fathers' sins, some Germans try to relativize and so escape the Holocaust, to have done with it by subsuming it in the history of the century. This group includes, for Miller, the revisionist historians, the director of the movie *Heimat*, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl when he led Ronald Reagan into the Bitburg cemetery. "Developments in the 80's," she writes, "have shown that a thorough reckoning with the past has still not taken place [in Germany]." It will have to, she claims, if Germany's "neighbors" are to be persuaded "that history will not repeat itself."

A dubious claim. Germany is reuniting itself, and its immediate neighbors have accepted this as inevitable and even desirable, quite apart from any more "thorough reckoning" with "the past." Such a reckoning as Miller would like may never take place.

Why should it? Above all, she believes, for reasons of mental health. Liberal and progressive, depressed by what she has found in Europe but still hopeful, Miller opposes living with skeletons in the closet. For her, disjunctions between the private and public, between asleep and awake, are unhealthy and dangerous. She would therefore like the Dutch, the French, the Soviets, for their own sakes, to tell themselves and their children the whole truth, and to do this before the last collaborators with the Nazis and the last Jewish survivors are gone. She wants the Europeans to do more than, at this late date, most of them probably think there is any good reason to do.

IF MILLER'S disappointment in Europe is with the Gentiles, in her own country it is with the Jews—or at least with some of them. She has nothing in principle against "the Jewish push for monuments,

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memorials, and public tributes to the period of their most intense suffering." This push has resulted in, among other things, the proclamation by Congress in 1980 of an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the designation of a parcel on the Mall in Washington, D.C. for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial, the cornerstone of which Ronald Reagan unveiled just before the end of his presidency and the opening of which is expected in 1993.

What Miller fears and warns against are bad taste, abstraction, political exploitation. She thinks the worst offender on all counts may be the "egregious" museum being built by Rabbi Marvin Hier at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. Hier, it seems, has a reputation as a "genius" at show-business techniques, and one of his constant messages (according to Miller) is that proper remembrance of the Holocaust requires American Jews to back the hawkish line in Israel. But this is not to say that Miller doubts Hier's sincerity, or rules out the possibility that his project may turn out to be not so terrible.

Nor is it to say that she wholly approves the museum in Washington. All depends, for her, on how it is done—"either this place will be a sanctuary, or it will be an abomination," she quotes Elie Wiesel predicting as he quit the organizing committee in a flurry of recriminations in 1986. The competition for funds with Rabbi Hier, and the fighting among Jewish sponsors, experts, and curators over the design and theme of this "living memorial," which Miller goes into in sad detail, have puzzled and perhaps amused other Americans.

THREE years before the scheduled opening, the Washington museum's main message is still to be clarified. To what extent will it present the Holocaust as an event in Jewish experience, something done by Gentiles to Jews, and to what extent will it, in the American way, try to render the event in its universal aspect? The answer is being worked out in what amounts to a political process, a many-sided and not necessarily unedifying dialectic of agendas. In a development too recent for Miller to mention, for example, it has been announced that a section of the Washington museum, as well as of another museum being built in New York, will honor the homosexual victims of the Nazis.

Conscientiously, Miller reports the arguments over whether there should be such a museum on the Mall in the first place. "The Mall," the columnist George Will has written, "is a shrine to which Americans come as pilgrims." This museum is being built, planned, and paid for by Jews. But will it be good for them? No, according to Henry Kissinger. "Building a memorial on national ground is likely only to reignite anti-Semitism . . . [by raising] . . . too high a profile." Kissinger prefers the project planned for Manhattan. Ambassador Max Kampelman, a member of the Holocaust Council, disagrees: "Our building will demonstrate the tolerance of [American] culture, its ability to empathize with the suffering of all its people." And Will is also for this museum in this place. It is "needed," he says, "because nothing in nature is more remarkable, or dangerous, than the recuperative power of innocence in a liberal society."

If Will and Kampelman are right, though, why remember only the Holocaust so prominently, so permanently? Why not also have empathizing memorials on the Mall to the suffering of the Irish, the Ukrainians, the Kampucheans, the Armenians, the blacks, the red Indians? Why not a Victims' Row, where each American group can exhibit its wounds and appease its demons? In fact, and in no surprise to anyone, legislation calling for a National Museum of the Afro-American Heritage on the Mall has already been introduced in Congress.

The danger may be that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial, far from exhibiting bad taste, will be superb, and will thus be apprehended as proof of the disproportionate attention-grabbing and guilt-manipulating power of one very small and shrinking group in the American tapestry. And the risk, if any, may be still greater if, unexpectedly, the memorial is brutally honest. Its architect, James Freed, has said that his building "will be stark and deliberately designed to make visitors feel uncomfortable." But what if it is so effective, so honest and accusatory, that some visitors are insulted in their patriotism, or become ill and drop out? For the Holocaust did not happen outside history. Nor, despite the fact that it did not occur in the New World, did America come out of those years with a clean record.

It can be argued that if visitors to the Washington memorial-museum are to be truly served, they will have to be informed at the very start about the origins of anti-Semitism in Christian doctrine. Then, along the way, in the midst of the horrors, maybe close to the authentic boxcar which is being brought over from Poland, they would have to learn, not only that the New York *Times* knew exactly what was happening at Auschwitz and chose to hush the news, but that FDR refused to order the bombing of the railroad to the gas chambers, and that the State Department saw to it that the number of lifesaving visas was kept to a minimum. George Will would rather that all that were not highlighted—the place on the Mall "should be an institution of understanding, not accusation."

THE easier it goes on such facts, the easier the museum may be for tourists to take and the less harm it may do to Jews in the future. Yet there is no telling for sure. America is a strange and wonderful country, where the flag is burned and life goes on. Irving Kristol has warned that finally America is a Christian, not a Judeo-Christian, country, yet it may turn out to be able to assimilate even a terrifying, accusatory memorial within sight of the White House and the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, with no ill effects to anyone. The current director of the project may be right when he says that "Jews who resist the notion of a Holocaust museum on federal land tend to be those who are not comfortable as Jews or as Americans."

Miller—the daughter of a Cath-

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olic mother and a Jewish father—seems comfortable enough, but she is aware that to erect the museum is to take a perhaps unnecesssary chance. She prefers the New York memorial because of its less touchy location and because it aims to put the Holocaust within the broader sweep of Jewish history. She also likes a project at Yale which is collecting the videotaped testimony of survivors for serious students, not tourists. This she calls crucial, since by focusing attention on individuals it combats "memory's most virulent enemy—abstraction." She declares that we owe this focus not just to the survivors and to those who were murdered but to ourselves, for unless we can keep it in mind that the Holocaust was comprised of the suffering of individuals, each with a face and name, ignorance and forgetfulness will prevail, depriving Jews and Gentiles of their "surest defense" against the repetition of "such gigantic cruelty."

Miller's respect, sympathy, almost awe for the survivors come across strongly. "The majority," she notes in her chapter on the U.S., "came here." This is incorrect—more went to Israel. She might have given a third dimension to her book by considering how the Holocaust is remembered, memorialized, and used in the Jewish state; but for some reason she has not done so. If in Europe the problem of memory has become mainly a non-Jewish one, and in the U.S. one for both Jews and Gentiles, in Israel the survivors and the new, presumably unmarked, generations are free to face the past as they choose, without needing to worry what kind of impression they are making on non-Jews.

The result ranges from the sensational to the appropriate. There is Meir Kahane's scarifying Museum of the Potential Holocaust in Jerusalem. There is the exhibit on resistance at the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz. And, most important, there is Yad Vashem, the government-sponsored institute, publishing house, and museum. Its mandate when set up by the Knesset in 1953 was a multiple one. It was to "ensure that the world never forgets," to preserve the memory of the murdered Jews and of those Gentiles who tried to help them, and to teach Israelis and Jews in general. Inevitably, besides a mandate, Yad Vashem too has an agenda, which of course is Zionist. A visitor is supposed to be persuaded that what happened could not have happened had there been a Jewish state.

Yad Vashem these days is strapped for money. One reason is that it has to fight with dozens of other claimants for a slice of the governmental budget. Another is that when its emissaries pass the hat in North America, they find that some of the biggest givers have already been reached by Washington, New York, or Los Angeles. A good quarter of the latest *Forbes* list of the "400 Richest Americans" are Jews. Some of these men are giving generously to help settle Soviet Jews in Zion. But when it comes to commemorating the Holocaust, they seem to feel that it is time to do so at home.

Nevertheless, the last and most nearly timeless project at Yad Vashem is coming to completion. This is a maze of ravines along which the names of every ravaged and vanished Jewish settlement in Europe are being carved in stone. The tacit realization behind this project is that despite all that we and our children and their children do and must do to keep them vivid, eventually the names and faces of those who were exterminated will be rubbed away by time, and all that will remain will be an abstraction. Hence these carvings, on this hillside.

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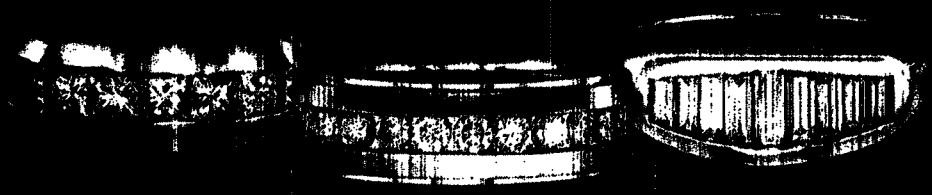

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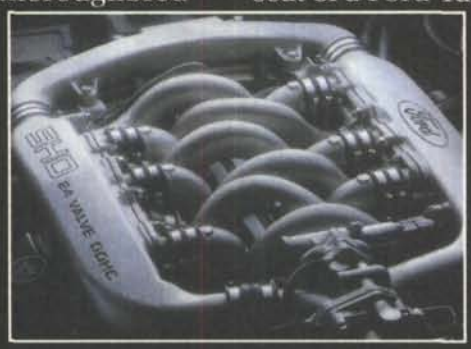

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